

U.S. asylum for Castro's daughter

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alina Fernandez Revuelta, daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, has left Cuba and been granted political asylum in the United States, a State Department official said Wednesday. Ms. Fernandez, who is about 40 and has long been a critic of her father's revolution, departed Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Africa Tuesday afternoon after her asylum request was granted. She left behind a teenage daughter in Cuba, the official said, adding that her whereabouts were unknown. Mr. Castro's daughter was quoted in a book published last year as saying that her father's Marxist rule in Cuba was "a dead-end street." She said reforms must come soon, but she doesn't think her father will be the one to implement them. "Strictly speaking, Fidel is a tyrant," she said. The interview was contained in Andres Oppenheimer's book, "Castro's final hour." Ms. Fernandez wished to leave the island for years but could never receive permission. The circumstances of her departure on Monday for Madrid were not clear.

Clinton aide: son charged with drug sale

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
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Clinton denies using guards for affairs

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton told Wednesday that during his 12 years as Arkansas governor he did not use bodyguards to arrange or hide extramarital affairs. "We did nothing wrong," said Mr. Clinton in an interview with international news agencies. "I just have nothing else to say about this," he added in making his first comments on the allegations. Two states troopers in Mr. Clinton security detail while he was governor of Arkansas have alleged that they helped arrange or cover up extramarital affairs for the president. Mr. Clinton referred reporters to a statement by senior aide Bruce Lindsey, who called the allegations "ridiculous." Mr. Clinton said: "I think we have cleared it up. I just think the statement speaks for itself. I just think it is not appropriate in a situation like this for me to do more than I'm doing."

Tomb of Isaiah found in Galilee

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The tomb of the Biblical Prophet Isaiah was recently uncovered in Galilee in northern Israel, the chief Rabbi of the town of Safed, Shmuel Eliash, said Wednesday. The tomb was recently found buried under rocks and earth near the kibbutz of Bar-Am and has already become a draw for pilgrims, he told AFP. The Israeli department of antiquities has not yet authenticated the find. Prophet Isaiah lived from 746 to 701 B.C. and his prophecies spoke of a divine power.

22 killed in Kurdish fighting

Erbil, Iraq (AFP) — At least 22 people have been killed in two days of heavy fighting between rival Kurdish groups in northeastern Iraq, officials reported here Wednesday. Forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the pro-Iranian Islamic League of Kurdistan clashed in Halabja, Chamchamal, Koyasan-cak, Rajia, Chakurna, Shalawa and Khalifan, they said. PUK officials and deputies in the Kurdish parliament said the PUK had captured Islamic League offices and bases in the past 24 hours. A large number of people were reported wounded. A major road from Erbil to Sulaymaniyah was closed because of the clashes, and U.N. officials in the region were ordered not to travel.

Djohar headed for victory in Comoros

NAIROBI (R) — Comoros Islands President Mohammed Said Djohar was headed for victory Wednesday in violent legislative elections, during which at least three people were killed, officials said. Kombo Suleimane, head of state-run Radio Comoros, told Reuters in Nairobi by telephone from the capital Moroni that early results showed Mr. Djohar's ruling coalition had won 21 seats — half of the 42-member chamber. Pro-Djohar supporters were expected to win two more constituencies where polling was delayed because of a shortage of ballot papers. Four opposition groups took 16 seats and polls were not held in three constituencies due to poor organisation. Government sources reached by telephone said opposition leaders on Wednesday urged Mr. Djohar to annul the polls, saying there were major irregularities in the electoral process.

50 suspects held in southern Egypt

ASSYUT (AFP) — Egyptian authorities have arrested 50 Muslim fundamentalists suspected of involvement in clashes between extremists and police in southern Egypt, police said Wednesday. The incidents late Sunday and early Monday left 13 dead: Eight policemen, including a general, four extremists and a passerby. Police sources said the suspects in the communities of Dairut, Al Qusaya, Abu Tig and Manafut had planned to launch new attacks against senior police and government officials in the region to mark the new year. Among those arrested since Tuesday is Ahmad Dina, who police said was involved in the attack Sunday night in Assiut, 380 kilometres south of Cairo, that killed the general and four policemen.

Progress reported in secret Israel-PLO talks in France

PARIS (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met Wednesday for secret talks on border checkpoints amid reports the two sides were developing a plan to share responsibility in the Paris talks.

A compromise would clear a significant obstacle in the Mideast peace negotiations, possibly hastening an Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank region around Jericho as agreed under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord.

The two delegations made initial contacts late Tuesday after the arrival of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, then convened for a formal session of negotiations at mid-morning Wednesday in a luxury hotel in Versailles, to the West of Paris, Israeli officials said.

The Palestinian delegation was led by Yasser Arafat and was headed by Mr. Peres, met PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunis Tuesday evening and Wednesday and said they discussed new ideas to break the deadlock.

"There was some progress, but not enough," Mr. Zvili told Reuters.

"There are some new ideas. Maybe they will solve the problem, though the solution is not easy," he added.

He did not elaborate, but said the negotiations going on in France have "analyzed the elements of disagreements and are concentrating now on bridges and checkpoints."

"Mr. Arafat told me that he understands the security needs we (Israelis) have, but that we should understand the political and psychological problems of the Palestinian people who

(Continued on page 5)



A Jewish settler passes an Israeli soldier checking the site of an attack that left two Israelis dead in a Ramallah suburb in the occupied West Bank (AFP photo)

2 Israelis killed; Hamas, DFLP claim responsibility

BEITUNYA, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Palestinian hardliners shot and killed two Israelis Wednesday, riding their car with bullets in a drive-by shooting in the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli army said the attack was carried out by the armed underground of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

It took place in the Palestinian village of Beitunya outside Ramallah, 15 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

They were shot by small arms at close range," it said in a statement.

The attack could complicate Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which have reportedly reached a critical stage in overcoming the last major obstacles delaying the implementation of autonomy in the occupied territories.

It ignited a raucous fight in Israel's parliament, interrupting the debate on the annual budget. Right-wing members accused the government of incompetence for failing to protect citizens and for signing a peace accord with the Palestinians in the first place.

"Again we see that this peace isn't peace. It is costing victims," said Moshe Nissim, a parliament member from the Likud opposition bloc and a

former justice minister.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal responded that the number of attacks was higher before the peace agreement. He blamed the attack on the Izzedine Al Qassam brigades, the armed underground wing of Hamas.

Brigadier Shaul Mofaz, a military commander at the scene, said a leaflet from the group claiming responsibility was found there.

He said either one or two men carried out the shooting. The brigadier said a manhunt was on for men belonging to three or four Hamas cells in the Ramallah area.

The leaflet said the two were killed to avenge the killing of four Palestinians by Israelis in two attacks.

The attack came after a 10-day lull in attacks by opponents of the peace process. It follows by days the return of almost 200 Hamas members exiled to the border with Lebanon for over a year.

Jewish settlement spokesman Shai Bazak said the victims were two religious men from the Bnei Brak suburb of Tel Aviv. Both believed to be in their 20s.

Settler leaders called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to cancel the autonomy accord and resign.

The army said a car had been seen waiting at a junction

on a secondary road between Ramallah and Jerusalem and apparently pounced just before noon (1000 GMT), when it saw two men driving along the road. The shot driver lost control and veered off the road, where the tan Renault station wagon was found by United Nations refugee affair officers.

Before speeding off, the attackers scattered leaflets claiming responsibility in the name of Hamas, which has vowed to sabotage the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord.

The leaflet said the two were killed to avenge the killing of four Palestinians by Israelis in two attacks.

In Syria, another group opposed to the peace accord, the Damascus-based wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said its fighters in the occupied territories killed the two Israelis.

Hamas also claimed responsibility in a telephone call and faxed message to an international news agency in Jerusalem. In both cases it said the attack was in retaliation for the killing of Hamas commander Imad Akeel by Israeli troops on Nov. 24.

Crown Prince urges shift in teaching orientation

IRBID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday called for a reassessment of Jordan's information programmes and for highlighting the Kingdom's messages in the different fields.

The comments contradicted what the foreign ministry's legal adviser Yoel Singer told another parliamentary committee last week.

Mr. Singer said the accord did not restrict the army "in time or space" and that troops would be free to enter autonomous areas on security operations.

Mr. Rabin also outlined to the foreign affairs committee that the Palestinian police, which is to maintain order during autonomy, would be equipped with "rifles, machine-guns and a number of armoured vehicles."

Nessim Zvili, a confidant of Mr. Peres, met PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunis Tuesday evening and Wednesday and said they discussed new ideas to break the deadlock.

"There was some progress, but not enough," Mr. Zvili told Reuters.

"There are some new ideas. Maybe they will solve the problem, though the solution is not easy," he added.

He did not elaborate, but said the negotiations going on in France have "analyzed the elements of disagreements and are concentrating now on bridges and checkpoints."

"Mr. Arafat told me that he understands the security needs we (Israelis) have, but that we should understand the political and psychological problems of the Palestinian people who

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University of Science and Technology (JUST) in Irbid.

Prince Hassan reviewed the international circumstances and the political pressures on Jordan and pointed to the importance of safeguarding democracy and working for the best of the country's pillars of the Jordanian society.

The Crown Prince also tackled educational issues and especially university education and called on

Jordanian universities to upgrade the level of their teaching policies from local and sectarian orientation to national orientation.

He also urged Jordanian universities to avoid absolute scientific policies and link scientific research and studies with the practical and realistic approaches.

Following the meeting with the deans of college at the university, the Crown Prince

visited King Abdullah Hospital, which will be situated within the university campus itself. The total cost of the hospital is estimated at JD 48 million and will have a capacity of 643 beds. It will benefit to around one million people.

The main donors for the project are the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development and the Islamic Bank for Development in Jeddah.

GCC to expand security, ready to cut oil output

RIYADH (Agencies) — King Fahd and his partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) put their signatures Wednesday to new plans to strengthen regional security.

The leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman also said they were ready to bolster oil prices by slashing output — if Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC producers agreed to do likewise.

The security agreement is said to entail spending up to \$5 billion on new airborne AWACS radar surveillance systems to cover the Gulf.

"The council strongly condemns the Iraqi regime for its pre-emptive policy in implementing resolutions of international legitimacy (the United Nations), especially Security Council Resolution 837 that defined the borders of the State of Kuwait with Iraq, and its aggressive behaviour against the State of Kuwait," said the communiqué.

The council was "in complete solidarity with the UAE and fully supports all the peaceful measures and means that it sees propitious to restore its sovereignty over the three islands on the basis of international legitimacy."

But in a conciliatory move towards Iran, the GCC leaders

(Continued on page 5)



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THE LAST TWO DAYS

Leaked blast details show British case against Libya

LONDON (Agencies) — New evidence showing why Britain believes that Libya was responsible for the vapourising of a U.S. jet over the Scottish border town of Lockerbie five years ago, killing 270 people, emerged Wednesday in details leaked to the *Guardian* newspaper.

The documents, detailing the British government's case against Tripoli over the bombing of Pan-Am Flight 103 on Dec. 21, 1988, alleged that Libyan intelligence had agents primed timing device to go off at almost the time the jet exploded.

Washington has demanded that Libya hand over the two Libyans accused of carrying out the attack, and backed by France and Britain obtained tougher U.N. sanctions against Tripoli in bid to force Libya to hand them over.

The paper said that should the case against the two Libyans ever come to trial, the British government would argue the following points:

— In December 1988, Libya's External Security Organisation (ESO) obtained from a Swiss company, Mebo Ag, a batch of 40 Olympus seven-day capacity timers.

— In 1985, a separate batch of prototype timers, designed for military use but supplied by the same company, was also delivered to the Libyans. One of these timers is believed to have been used to detonate the Lockerbie bombing.

— On Dec. 21, 1988, Libyan intelligence officers allegedly set an Olympus timing device — later returned to the Swiss company — for 1930 on a

Wednesday. The actual explosion occurred at 1903 on Wednesday, Dec. 21.

It is the coincidence of this fact — a timer from one batch apparently tested for use and primed to go off on Wednesday at near the same time as the timer from another batch actually did go off — that helps explain British and U.S. confidence that Libya was responsible for mounting the operation.

A BBC documentary screened late Tuesday also threw up new details.

Firstly, it cast doubt on part of the prosecution case by quoting Mebo Managing Director Edwin Bollier, as saying that two of the 1985 batch of timers, originally said to have gone only to Libya, had in fact been sold to East Germany.

This raised the possibility that detonator expert Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, which was closely linked to the former East German secret service Stasi, could have been responsible.

But the programme also quoted a senior U.S. official, Gerry Bremer, as saying that after the arrest of a group of his operatives in Germany, Mr. Jibril — contacted by Iran — had handed the bombing over to his allies in Libya.

Jibril went to the Libyans and said, "I am in breach of a contract I have with the Libyans. They're going to pay me a big piece of money to attack an American plane," Mr. Bremer said.

"It seems to me it was not in

the end Ahmad Jibril who conducted the attack though he had a contract to do it — it was the Libyans who conducted the attack," he added.

Clinton pledges justice

In Washington, U.S. President Bill Clinton led ceremonies commemorating victims of Flight 103 Tuesday and said the United States would not rest until the case was closed.

The president made the pledge as he broke ground at Arlington national cemetery for a memorial to the 270 victims of the bombing.

He told families and friends of the victims of the bombing: "Our nation will never stop from pursuing justice against those who caused it for the attack on Pan Am 103 was an attack not only on the individuals of 21 nations who were aboard the aircraft, it was an attack on America."

Mr. Clinton said the United States remained determined to bring those responsible to justice, declaring "we will not rest until the case is closed."

Flanked by the grave markers of America's military dead, Mr. Clinton broke the ground for the memorial made of 270 stone blocks.

"Each tells the story of a life wonderfully cut short," Mr. Clinton said.

More than 100 families and friends of the Lockerbie victims, assembled on a chilly, breezy day beneath fitful sun to hear Mr. Clinton assert that the memorial would be a lasting testament to the innocent who died.

Fadlallah: Syria could help end prisoners deadlock

BEIRUT (R) — The spiritual leader of Lebanon's pro-Iranian group said on Tuesday Syria could play a key role in resolving the issue of Arab prisoners and missing Israeli servicemen.

But Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah rejected a U.S. plea to reveal the fate of 52 Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon since the 1980s.

"We reject the American presentation because we reject any dealing with the problem from one side without the other," Sheikh Fadlallah told Reuters at his heavily-guarded house in Beirut.

"We encourage discussion of this issue on condition that it is a balanced one where the Lebanese and Palestinian captives are looked upon in the same way as the Israeli captives."

Asked which party could undertake such a mission, Sheikh Fadlallah said: "If Syria is the one who undertakes it, then I believe Syria can move in several positions in this aspect."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in Damascus earlier this month that Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad had undertaken to help a U.S. congressional mission seeking information on the missing Israelis.

Sheikh Fadlallah said the U.S. interest in the missing Israelis was "further evidence that America, whether its administration or Congress, thinks only about Israel."

But he said there appeared to be growing U.S. interest in developing relations with Syria.

"America, when looking into the future of its interests in the region, knows that the Syrian role, no matter how much developments weaken it... still has the means to sabotage," said Mr. Fadlallah.

Sheikh Fadlallah said the company said in a written statement last week that if Iran showed an interest in a contract for a nuclear power plant, "Skoda Plzen would react positively, of course within the framework of Czech law."

Iran welcomes Czech Skoda Plzen, denies seeking nuclear link

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Iran's ambassador to Prague issued a statement Tuesday which appeared intended to distance Iran from reports that the country was seeking nuclear technology through the Czech company Skoda Plzen A.S.

AMBASSADOR RASOUL Movahedian, who met Skoda General Director Lubomir Soudek on Tuesday, said he welcomed stronger ties with the Czech heavy engineering company but said the relationship was aimed at peaceful projects only.

"Iran with putting forward an economically oriented foreign policy, gives priority to friendly and traditional partners who offer to advance reliable technical and economic joint projects," Mr. Movahedian said in the statement issued after the meeting.

"Iran has really no intention to be engaged in non-peaceful efforts, neither by the Czech side nor by any other international side," he said.

The New York Times reported last Friday that the Czech republic had promised to stop a Czech engineering company from exporting nuclear technology to Iran after pressure from unnamed U.S. government officials.

Czech officials have repeatedly denied reports published in Israel, France and the Czech Republic which have quoted Israeli sources as saying that Iran was "looking to the Czech Republic to supply nuclear components."

Skoda Plzen officials said last week that Mr. Soudek discussed a possible nuclear power project with Iranian officials during a visit to Tehran in late November, but that no agreement was made.

The company said in a written statement last week that if Iran showed an interest in a contract for a nuclear power plant, "Skoda Plzen would react positively, of course within the framework of Czech law."

The minister did not give the exact location of the new reserves or its estimated volume, but said more details would soon be provided.

Iran was previously reported to have reserves of some 20 trillion cubic metres of gas — accounting for 15 per cent of the world's total and ranking it second after Russia.

Most of Iran's reserves however remain untapped since the country lacks the means to transport them to consumers.

Tehran has begun technical and commercial studies with a consortium of European companies, led by Gaz de France, to examine a project on exploiting and exporting its gas to Europe.

The Czech government requires approval of possible military technology exports by its defense, interior, foreign and trade ministries on a case-by-case basis before granting an export license.

The former state-run conglomerate, now owned by a consortium of Czech banks and investment funds, has extensive experience in building nuclear power equipment, as well as divisions which produce everything from conventional weapons to machine tools and locomotives.

Skoda Plzen said it plans to begin two joint ventures in Iran for assembling trolley buses and importing sugar milling equipment. It said it was involved in the construction of seven sugar cane plants worth some 20 billion crowns (\$669 million).

"Vast" gas reserves

Iran has discovered "vast" off-shore gas reserves in the Gulf, Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh announced Wednesday.

Mr. Aghazadeh told Tehran Radio the new reserves are of the "same importance" as those at South Pars, the Gulf north of Qatar, which contains an estimated three trillion cubic metres of gas.

The minister did not give the exact location of the new reserves or its estimated volume, but said more details would soon be provided.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Theologian appeals for leniency

MECCA (AP) — Saudi Arabia's leading theologian called Tuesday on governments facing a surge in Islamic fundamentalism to be tolerant. Referring to Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz said: "Islam is a religion of tolerance. The rulers should not be harsh or cruel in dealing with the others. Sheikh Ben Baz was addressing the opening session of the Muslim World League's 33rd annual conference. More than 52 scholars from Muslim nations are attending the meeting at the league's headquarters in Mecca. Sheikh Ben Baz urged the application of Sharia in Asia and Africa. He also called for wider support for Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia.

Iran wants to expand Morocco ties

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani told Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Filali on Tuesday that Iran wanted to expand relations with Morocco. "We are happy like you about the expansion of relations... the situation of the Islamic World is such that countries like Iran and Morocco should have greater cooperation," Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying. Iran and Morocco resumed diplomatic ties in 1991 after a year break. Relations were cut after King Hassan of Morocco took in his old friend the Shah of Iran, who had fled the 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. "Whenever there is a rift between Islamic countries it is filled by satanic powers," Tehran Radio quoted Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri as telling Mr. Filali. The minister also met his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati who said Iran put no limit on improvement of ties with Morocco, the radio added. Mr. Filali, the most senior Moroccan official to visit Iran since 1979, arrived in Tehran Tuesday.

Iraq in shambles, says U.S. senator

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Iraqi economy is near collapse as a result of U.N. sanctions, the chairman of the Senate intelligence committee said Tuesday. Visitors to Iraq told Senator Dennis DeConcini during a visit to the Middle East last week that the country is in shambles and that President Saddam Hussein has reacted by cracking down on suspected opponents. "Sanctions certainly are hurting substantially, even though some things are getting in," Mr. DeConcini said. "It's a real disaster going on there economically," Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak advised Mr. DeConcini not to lift the sanctions, as Baghdad is asking.

2 killed, 3 wounded in Yemen shootout

SA'NA (AFP) — Gunmen in Yemen shot dead two people, including a policeman, and wounded three others Tuesday in a shootout between security forces and armed car thieves, an Interior Minister spokesman said. Quoted by state television, the spokesman said the incident occurred after the bandits stole two cars on the Sanaa-Hodeida road in the north of the country. The bandits opened fire on the police which launched a massive manhunt with the help of air force helicopters, he said. The Interior Ministry is determined to pursue the criminals and bring them to justice, the spokesman added. Several car thefts have been recorded in Yemen in recent years where carrying arms is tolerated.

Section of Israeli highway due to cloud

TEL AVIV (AP) — A leak in a chlorine vat owned by the state water company caused a cloud of gas over the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway Tuesday, closing part of the highway and injuring one fireman, police said. Firemen, police and employees of the Environment Ministry were rushed to the Shazar Highway intersection near Bet Shemesh some 15 kilometres west of Jerusalem. "There was a cloud of chlorine that gave off a very harsh odor... and it was recommended that this area of the highway be closed for the health of the drivers and the residents in the area," said firefighter Shlomo Cohen on Israel Radio. Mr. Cohen said drivers were directed to travel on alternate routes. A firefighter was hospitalised in fair condition suffering from gas inhalation, police said. The section of the highway was closed for about an hour.

Clinton signs treatment of Gulf soldiers

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton signed legislation to require the Veterans Affairs Department to treat Gulf war veterans for diseases that may have resulted from exposure to toxic substances. "Over the past 2½ years, Gulf veterans have experienced a wide range of health care problems that have eluded diagnosis and cure," Mr. Clinton said in a statement on Tuesday, one day after he signed the bill. He said the veterans' symptoms include fatigue, painful muscles and joints, bleeding gums, skin rashes, short-term memory loss and hair loss. "With this legislation, the V.A. will have the authority to provide to these veterans both inpatient and outpatient care on a priority basis," Mr. Clinton said. "Thus, we can help make certain that these veterans' health care needs are met as fully as possible while important research into their problems goes forward." Possible chemical and biological contamination during the Gulf war has become an issue because of the thousands of veterans suffering from debilitating and undiagnosed illnesses that have come to be known as Gulf syndrome. Oil fire fumes, pesticides and other environmental hazards have been raised as possible causes. The Pentagon says it has been unable to pinpoint a single reason for the illnesses, and has emphasised that there were no known incidents of chemical agent exposures or detections during the war.

Algiers shaken by mild tremor

ALGIERS (R) — A tremor that measured about 3.0 on the Richter scale rippled through Algiers at 23.05 (22.05 GMT) on Tuesday night, state radio said. The tremor, which shook buildings from the city centre to the suburbs on the hills surrounding the capital, was centred on the southwestern neighbourhood of Bouzareah, the radio said. "The whole house shook," said a man who lives on a hill above the city, adding that the quake did not cause any damage. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

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PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 ... *Tarat* ... News in French ... *Reconcile* ... News in Hebrew ... News in Arabic ... Family Matters ... Reasonable Doubts ... News in English ... Film "Fighter for His"

PRAYER TIMES

05:05 ... Fajr (Sunrise) Dhuhr ... Asr ... Magrib ... Isha'

CHURCHES

Church of Nazareth Church Swieifieh, Tel. 510740 ... Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 524591 ... Church of the Annunciation Tel. 5440 ... A Salle Church Tel. 661757 ... Assemblies Church Tel. 622366 ... Church of the Annunciation Tel. 5441.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

17/12, Asqua 20, Humidity reading: Asqua 67 per cent, Asqua 71 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Raouf Mazzawi ... 794788 ... St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 ... Amman International Church Tel. 652526 ... Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 524328 ... German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 651119 ... The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654922 ... Church of Nazareth Tel. 673591.

AMMAN: Dr. Raouf Mazzawi ... 794788 ... St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 ... Amman International Church Tel. 652526 ... Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 524328 ... German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 651119 ... The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654922 ... Church of Nazareth Tel. 673591.

AMMAN: Civil Defense Department ... 661111 ... Civil Defense Immediate ... 630341 ... Civil Defense Emergency ... 199 ... Fire Brigade ... 691228 ... Blood Bank ... 683402 ... Highway Police ... 683402 ... Public Security Department ... 630101 ... Fire Department ... 600200 ... Fire Complaints ... 661176 ... Complaints ... 897467 ... Amman Municipality ... 787111 ... Telephone Information (directory assistance) ... 121 ... Overseas Calls ... 0102030 ... Central Amman Telephone Repairs ... 623101 ... Abd Al-Hameed Telephone Repairs ... 661101 ... Jordan Television ... 773111 ... Radio Jordan ... 774111 ... Water Authority ... 681000 ... Jordan Electricity Authority ... 615615 ... Electric Power Company ... 636381 ... AQABA: Royal Flight Information ... 06-533200 ... Queen Alia Int'l. Airport ... 06-533210.

EMERGENCIES

Jordan, S. Africa establish ties

By Suhaib Obeidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — South Africans, whose knowledge of Jordan has been limited to information provided mainly by Israel, will be getting a more balanced perspective of the country after the establishment of formal relations between Amman and Pretoria, according to Anthony Greenham, who has been entrusted with setting up a South African diplomatic mission here.

"There is much interest in Jordan among South Africans, but in the absence of formal relations, all that we have seen came from Israel's side. Now we hope we can change that and get a more balanced perspective," said Mr. Greenham, the newly appointed charge d'affaires.

South Africa, long isolated from the outside world as a result of the sanctions imposed against it for its apartheid policies, is getting back to the family of nations after it took serious steps to dismantle the discriminatory measures against its black population. Leader of the African National Congress (ANC) Nelson Mandela has recognised the reforms taken by the government in Pretoria and called on the United Nations to lift punitive sanctions taken against South Africa.

Jordan was the first country in the Arab World to establish diplomatic ties with South Africa after a series of contacts between the two countries. The first formal contact took place last March when a delegation of Jordanian businessmen met with President F.W. de Klerk and Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Khalid Ahu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industries, delivered a message from His Majesty King Hussein to President F.W. de Klerk in which Jordan expressed in-

terest in establishing closer ties with South Africa.

In May, Foreign Minister Botha visited Jordan and met His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and in August, the Crown Prince sent a letter to Mr. Botha suggesting the establishment of a South African commercial office in Amman.

After the South African parliament approved the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) in September, Jordan and South Africa sought the establishment of formal diplomatic relations on the level of ambassadors, which were announced later that month.

Pretoria's new mission here is fully operative and currently works out of temporary headquarters at one of Amman's five star hotels until permanent premises are arranged. An ambassador will be appointed following the April 1994 parliamentary elections in South Africa, according to Mr. Greenham.

The first South African embassy in the Arab World was opened in Bahrain in November, but that "was only a matter of logistics," said Mr. Greenham.

As a result of long years of sanctions against their country, South Africans have developed isolationist attitudes. "Officially we have been cut off from the outside world for quite some time, but self-interests play an important role, and we did everything possible to get around the sanctions and for some time, we kept an economic boom," Mr. Greenham said.

Economic growth then started to slow down and recession hit in 1993. But with the fall of communism, the fear of a Marxist-oriented South African economy has gone, paving the way for positive steps towards a free economy, he said.

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved

good credit lending, which we hope will help our economy to boom," said Mr. Greenham.

On the positive side of sanctions, South Africa developed its own industries, mainly mining, agriculture and arms.

"We have developed very sophisticated mine-clearing equipment, considered to be the best in the world," he said.

South Africa's mining industry boasts a host of metals and minerals like gold, platinum, manganese, uranium and diamonds. Next month a South African official will visit the Jordanian Potash Company to discuss possibilities of a future joint venture, according to Mr. Greenham.

South Africa's interests in Jordan focus on joint projects of mining and water techniques. Mineral depots in the Dead Sea and expertise in water technology are fields where Jordan and South Africa can pool their expertise.

The balance of trade between Jordan and South Africa, with an estimated annual worth of \$40 million, has so far been in the latter's favour.

While Jordan imports iron and steel products, it only exports to South Africa "a host of various little things, so we hope to increase this into a balance," Mr. Greenham said.

As part of confidence-building measures, Jordan and South Africa scrapped visa requirements for both countries' nationals for business and tourism stays of up to 30 days. "We hope to see an increase in travel on both sides," he said.

Child shoots himself

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 12-year-old boy who shot himself accidentally while playing with his father's gun, died Tuesday in Queen Alia Military Hospital, according to a police report.

The victim's mother told police she was in the house when she heard gun-shots coming from her son's room.

The mother said she went to see what happened to her son and she found him lying on the floor bleeding. Hospital sources said the victim identified only as J.A.D., was declared dead on arrival as a result of gun wounds to the head.

Police said they have seized the weapon and are investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, Zarqa police are searching for an unidentified assailant who reportedly shot a 10-year-old girl who was standing in the front-yard of their house Tuesday.

The girl was taken to Zarqa Hospital and is reported in good condition.

Police are conducting investigations to identify the assailant.

Art gift to RJ

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Jordanian Society for Fine Arts Wednesday presented Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, with a gift of nine paintings by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries.

The gift, which was presented by the society president Princess Wijdan Ali was in recognition of RJ's efforts towards supporting the Jordanian artistic movement and its contributions towards cultural work in Jordan.

RJ Chief Executive Officer Mahmoud Jamal Balqez received the gift which was presented to mark the airline's celebrations of its 30 year anniversary.

Mr. Balqez thanked the princess for the valuable gift noting that the generous act would serve as an incentive for RJ's continued backing for culture and art activities in Jordan. The photograph shows Mr. Balqez receiving one of the paintings from Princess Wijdan Ali.

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Caritas to distribute Italian aid to poor

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Ernesto Oliviero, an Italian philanthropist left Amman Wednesday for home after delivering a plane-load of used clothes, food and medicine to Jordan Caritas to be distributed to the neediest Jordanians and Iraqis.

According to Father Mousa Adeli, head of a liaison office for Iraq Caritas the plane carried five tonnes of clothes, one tonne of food supplies and two tonnes of medicines as a gift from the Italian people.

He told the Jordan Times that the Latin patriarchate in Jordan took delivery of the aid noting that Bishop Salim Al Sayegh ordered that half of the relief supplies be distributed to Jordanians and the other half to the Iraqi poor, according to Father Adeli.

Fr. Adeli, who had served as Jordan Caritas director for many years noted that during his mandate he received 15 plane loads of relief supplies from Mr. Oliviero collected by thousands of Italian volunteers from the Italian public.

Most of the voluntary campaigns organised by Jordan Caritas over the past 10 years entailed the distribution of clothes and medicines, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, in Jordan's rural regions, said Father Adeli.

Noting that the 16th plane load was supplied by the Italian Sermig Society, Father Adeli said that Mr. Oliviero had received the Jordanian Peace Medal from His Majesty King Hussein in 1991, following the Gulf war, for his humanitarian services to the poor in Jordan.

The Sermig Society, which groups 600 employees, takes charge of raising contributions with the help of thousands of volunteers in Italy.

He said that last year's plane load of supplies included 35-wheel chairs for the handicapped to Jordan.

Mr. Oliviero said upon his arrival in Amman Tuesday evening, that the latest supplies on board the plane were presented to Jordan which "has been making endeavours towards Democracy."

Jordan is a country, known for its leadership's wise policies and one which played host to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis," said Mr. Oliviero.

Jordan Caritas Director General Nabil Haddad voiced Jordan's appreciation for the continued Italian aid to the Kingdom's poor.

Writers to get state awards

Government cuts customs duties on pick-up trucks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has decided to slash by up to 50 per cent customs duties on medium-size pick-up trucks with effect from Jan. 1, 1994, Finance Minister Sami Gammon said Wednesday.

The minister, who announced the names of the winners at a press conference held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman said the awards for outstanding works in 1992 would be formally presented to the winners at a ceremony to be held under the Royal patronage at a later date.

According to Dr. Mahmoud the following citizens deserved the awards as recommended by the special committee:

Dr. Ibrahim Saafin won the literature award for his studies in short stories.

Dr. Kamel Saeed won the award for his work in social sciences.

Artist Muna Abdul Majid Saudi and artist Karram Tumch won the arts award.

Mr. Jamal Abu Hamdan won the award for theatre.

Dr. Saad Hijazi and Dr. Ibrahim Khatib won the award for studies in Jordanian children's growth and development.

The 35 per cent to 50 per

cent reduction will be applicable to pick-up trucks of up to four-tonne carrying capacity under a slab system prepared by the customs department.

The minister said there was no consideration of whatsoever reducing customs duties on passenger cars. He referred to his own earlier comments that the government felt that Jordanian roads are already saturated with small cars; clogging the traffic and consuming imported fuel, which in turn imposes a burden on the treasury.

He has said that the government might also consider reducing customs duties on large passenger vehicles such as buses which serve a larger number of people at cheaper costs than small cars. No decision has been taken in this respect yet.

Mohammad Jamal, director of the Customs Department at the Ministry of Finance, was quoted as saying in local reports that the government was keen to encourage local assembly of automobiles.

He said the government had also decided to reduce customs duties on automobile chassis to

one per cent from the present 25 per cent with effect from Jan. 1.

A local company has already announced plans to assemble cars in Jordan in collaboration with a South Korean company, but it would take several years before the first vehicle leaves the assembly line.

Customs duties on cars in Jordan are among the highest in the region, but that has not done much to decrease the number of cars in the Kingdom. Adding further to the number of cars here were the tens of thousands of vehicles brought in from Kuwait and other Gulf states by expatriates who returned home in the wake of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Despite the 50 per cent slash in customs duties, a pick-up will also remain beyond the reach of an average wage-earner in Jordan.

The cheapest pick-up in customs duties around JD 11,000; with the reduction in customs the price will come down to around JD 9,000 in the country, where the average monthly earning is around JD 160.

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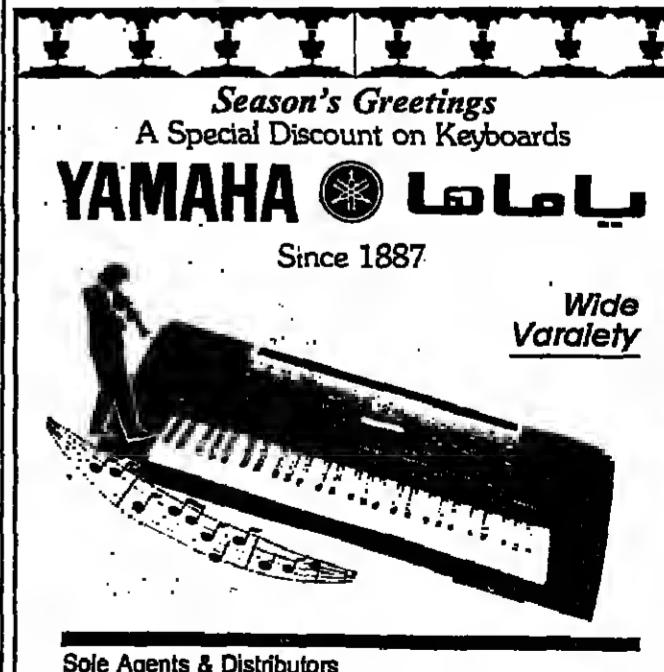
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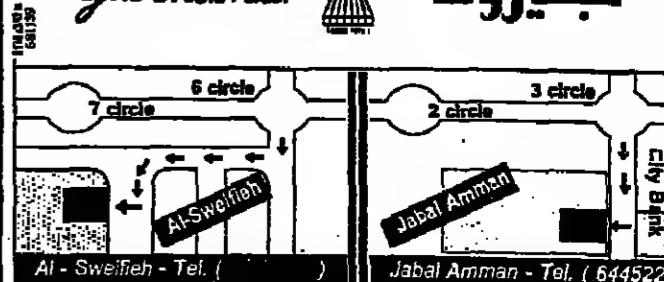
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'New' approach to 'old' tax

FINANCE MINISTER Sami Gammoh did the right thing when he engaged the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in a dialogue about the proposed new sales tax. This kind of communication and consultation should be the mainstay of all governmental initiatives, over and above the regular links and channels with parliament.

Mr. Gammoh kept the door wide open for additional discussions with the private sector about the implications of the tax on Jordanian industry and business when he told his audience Tuesday that it was not too late for introducing amendments to the legislation. Even though the new sales levy would replace the already-in-place consumption tax, the ramifications of the new measure nevertheless needs a thorough reconsideration in consultation with the representatives of our business community. It is not enough to brush off the accusation that the new tax was introduced as a result of pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Minister of Finance rejected this allegation outright although other knowledgeable people within and from outside the government insist that the additional tax is part and parcel of a standby agreement with the IMF.

The crux of the problem is whether the new levy would inhibit the growth of Jordanian business opportunities and decrease protection for the country's infant industry. If it turned out to be true, for example, that the effects of the tax would benefit imported products, then we have a legitimate cause for alarm and concern. This country cannot afford to be a net importer for the rest of its life. Industrialisation on our part, on the other hand, is a process that requires guidance, support and reasonable protection since the starting point is always difficult.

This is not to mention the political fallout from any precipitous move to make life in the country harder economically. If Jordanian industries lose some of the local market to foreign competitors as a result of the tax, this would be at the expense of labour which is already at a critical stage.

Yet the Minister of Finance is on the right track by soliciting views and counsel from the private sector. As long as this process of give and take continues there will always be real hope for a proper resolution of all the issues related to the new tax. Since the new legislation will not be submitted to Parliament for adoption till the process of reconsideration is completed, there is every reason to believe that happy compromise can still be found, hopefully soon.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to increase salaries of civil servants and military personnel as well as pensioners is bound to help employees fulfill a long-cherished desire for improved living conditions, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday. The income of employees as well as the pensioners has been eroded due to the high prices of various commodities, said the paper which added that increases would help stability because it would encourage employees to double their efforts in serving the nation through increased production. Dr. Majali's statement Tuesday reflected the government's plans to address basic issues which, among other things, include provision for subsidies for basic commodities, prices for the benefit of the low-income groups in Jordan, added the daily. It said that the premier's decision to work out a plan for a health scheme for all Jordanians reflected the government's concern with reducing the burden of the poor families who are no more able to cope with the cost of medical services on their own. Addressing these vital issues is bound to accomplish a major achievement for which the present government will take credibility, the paper continued. Furthermore, the government's plans to do justice to the judiciary in view of the judges' serious and sensitive responsibility constitutes a very constructive step designed to strengthen the independence of the judicial authority in the Kingdom and its integrity, added the paper. Indeed, said the paper, these plans represent another achievement for the government which has been shouldering a responsible role in building up the country through democracy, despite the difficult situation and the financial burdens it is facing at present.

BY DECLARING their adherence to Israel's conditions for a settlement of the PLO-Israel differences over the implementation of the Oslo deal, Israeli leaders have condemned the negotiations to total failure, said Sawi Al Shaab daily. The paper said that after the Oslo meetings in the past two days, the two sides are starting negotiations anew in the French capital, but there can be no hope for an end to differences as long as Israel holds on to its intransigent position. Both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres have been declaring Israel's adamant position, never relenting on the question of controlling the bridges and the borders separating the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip from Jordan and Egypt, said the paper. Noting that both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres are working towards aborting the Gaza-Jericho first agreement, the paper said that such an adamant stand is a time bomb that threatens the whole Middle East peace process, and proves that the Israeli leaders are afraid of the idea of a comprehensive peace with the Arab states.

Road accidents and road ethics in a cultural context

By Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

WHENEVER a road accident occurs, involving either vehicles or pedestrians, traffic officials seize the opportunity to remind us, time and again, of what they consider the major 'causes' of traffic accidents: a) failure to obey road signs, especially with respect to speed and overtaking; b) bad road conditions, particularly in winter time; and c) the condition of the vehicle itself.

Undeniably, these are all factors which contribute significantly to the trauma we have been (and still are) experiencing since the introduction of vehicles (whose number has and is dramatically increasing) into our lives and since the abrupt and unexpected increase of the inhabitants of our towns and cities themselves. In my opinion, however, these factors are not the real causes.

The causes lie deeper, in our 'public' character and in our present culture. The problem, as I see it, is essentially a problem of misguided upbringing and bad education. In this larger context, I wish to raise the following three points.

First, people in our society generally belittle danger. Knowing or not (often unwittingly), they overlook the risks involved in many of the actions or moves they make, especially those which do not appear to be visibly risky or dangerous. This is true when they swim in the muddy waters of the Kingdom's dams and drown, when they work in the midst of all kinds of poisonous fumes in factories and repair shops without bothering to wear a mask, when they prepare sandwiches in restaurants without putting on sanitary gloves, when parents see their kids wading in sewerage water and do not care, when school boys play soccer without wearing the right shoes, when butchers hang meat outside for flies to feast on, when businessmen erect huge commercial centres without proper fire-escape doors or stairs, etc.

Our relation to the road, be we motorists or pedestrians, is based on the same principle: carelessness, recklessness, ignorance, haphazardness. Call it whatever you wish, it all boils down to underestimation of danger. How many people wear a vest or a helmet when they ride a bicycle? How many (and I am talking about adults, not children here) look left and right when they cross the street? They see your car, and they turn their faces the other way. Drivers, similarly, are no better than the pedestrians. They see you crossing the street and they come dashing at you, trying to pass before you cross. Where do most children play soccer or volleyball? In the streets. Do you think they are truly aware of danger? Worse, do you think their parents realise the potential risks of such recklessness?

Secondly, there is either an obvious indifference to or a deliberate disrespect of what we may call public space in our society, including the roads. Whatever we learn at home, at school, and at other educational establishments remains, in most cases, restricted to or confined within the home, school, and establishment territory. The moment we are outside the

realm of these three institutions, we seem to feel free to do whatever we feel like. We destroy public property (how many functioning public phones do we have in the country?), throw garbage in the streets, and trash our outing sites.

I have heard the following remark from many foreign visitors and friends. We are amazed, they say, at how courteous, polite, and generous Arabs are in their homes. When you come to the door-step, they say, 'after you'; when the tea or coffee is served, they help themselves after you do; when they eat, they serve you first; when you rise to wash your hands, they wash theirs after you do, etc. But when they are in the street, especially when they are behind the wheel, their personality changes 180 degrees. They seem to want to do everything before everybody else does.

Unfortunately, such characterisation is both perceptive and correct. The Arab of today, in his public (not private) life is selfish, disorderly, and even rude. He suffers from both a double-standard complex and a form of schizophrenia. Take our university students in the lecture room. On the whole, they are truly well-behaved, attentive, disciplined, amiable, and at times even shy. You look at them, and you see angels. Try, however, to drive on campus, which incidentally, has wide sidewalks and perfect road signs; you will be shocked by how rude, undisciplined, and reckless these "angels" become outside the classroom.

The point here is there are hardly any street, road, or public space ethics.

Thirdly, and most importantly, our education (this also applies to our upbringing) is mainly rhetorical and theoretical, not empirical or practical. Without a doubt, our parents and teachers 'tell' us a great deal. They inform us not to speed when we drive and to pay attention when we cross the street. In fact, they give numerous similar lectures daily: 'Thou shalt, thou shalt not.' But telling is not real education, nor is it real upbringing. Effective education and upbringing are those which implant, instil, and foster not information but values and morals inside one's character. The parents or teachers will do better (much better) if they take us to the street and show us how to cross — once, twice, three times — until crossing properly becomes a habit or second nature. They will do better also, if they teach us by example, i.e., if they apply what they themselves preach. To create a sense of responsibility in our kids and students, we ourselves have to be responsible.

The solution is already implied in our discussion of the problem. Let us (parents and teachers, primarily) live up to our society's expectations of us and to the challenges of our mission or calling. Let us take the time, the effort, and the pain (even) to educate not to preach, to demonstrate effectively not to theorise, to instill values and build character not fill the heads of our young people with abstract, meaningless lore.

Road ethics are part and parcel of our moral character. Their absence is, in my opinion, the major cause of accidents.

Peace with a phantom

By Fawaz Turki

SINCE THE signing of the deal with the PLO, it has passed almost unnoticed that Israel, in effect, signed a peace agreement with a phantom organisation, because the PLO, in every sense of the word, no longer exists.

There was a time, of course, when the PLO not only existed but legitimately represented the aspirations of the Palestinian people. This legitimacy derived from three sources: the power the PLO's armed fighters and militias projected, the ubiquity of its popular institutions and the genuine support that almost every segment of the Palestinian society extended to it.

But the military forces were disbanded and expelled from Beirut in 1982 and later dispersed to such faraway places as Yemen, Algeria and Sudan. Over the years, large numbers of these combatants have resettled elsewhere, mostly in the Gulf countries, where they have found gainful employment, or in their original Arab host states, where they have rejoined their families.

The various social and political institutions that the PLO operated for many years also have collapsed. Institutions such as the Palestine Red Crescent, the Samied Society, the Souk Al Ghurb Foundation, the Palestine Research Centre and the Palestine National Fund had offered such things as health care, employment opportunities, educational

facilities, academic grants and social services to hundreds of thousands of grateful Palestinians, both in exile and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

And political institution — for the most part democratic — had made it possible for Palestinians of all stripes to have their voices heard without having their heads cracked, as often happens in the repressive and patriarchal societies of the Arab World. Then, of course, there was the Palestine National Council, the parliament-in-exile and ultimate Palestinian political institution, whose many sessions since 1965 had brought together a representative sampling of the various stratifications of class, ideological currents and political gentilities that existed in Palestinian society.

All of these institutions closed down soon after the conclusion of the Gulf war, when the PLO began, very simply, to go broke. Denied access to financial aid from the oil-rich Arab states — including the taxes levied on Palestinian expatriate workers there — the PLO could no longer meet its obligations to these groups, which soon atrophied and ceased to function.

Finally, there is the erosion of popular support for the PLO among the mainstream, an erosion tied to the sneaking suspicion of Palestinians everywhere that over the years, their leadership has lost touch with the realities of Palestinian life.

Instead of bringing to an end the unspeakable pain and desolation that had characterised the life of most Palestinians, this leadership brought one diplomatic defeat after another, one military disaster after another and one act of social grief after another. The most prominent example: the expulsion of more than 400,000 Palestinians from Kuwait, an event that has caused severe disruptions in the lives of three times as many other Palestinians — and directly linked to the bumbling of the PLO on its position regarding the Gulf war.

The PLO today could not even be called a ghost of its old self. The three or four major factions that had belonged to it and given it the appearance of an umbrella organisation have long since walked out. Fatah, the largest and most influential voice in the organisation, is torn by dissension. So many members of the Executive Committee have resigned that this body no longer holds meetings.

If the PLO has any existence at all, it is embodied in the person of Yasser Arafat and a couple of dozen men around him now sitting in Tunis and dreaming dreams of glory about how, with help from a 'strong police force,' they will soon be running the autonomy show from Jericho and Gaza. Rejectionists in Palestinian society, not all of whom are fundamentalists or radicals.

The writer is author of *Exile's Return: The Making of a Palestinian-American*, to be published in January. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

point to how Arafat and his few loyalists have, in effect, drafted a peace agreement behind the backs of their people and signed it on the White House lawn without consulting or convening the Palestinian National Council. The exile community, 4 million strong, feels betrayed.

Other Palestinians, especially those whose husbands, sons or fathers had given their lives for the cause and had been dependent for a living on their social security checks from the PLO, have been pauperised. Palestinian democrats feel enraged at seeing their ideas thrown out the window by a few posturing officials and a vaudevillian Arafat.

Alas, the PLO, or those remnants of it sitting around Tunis today, will soon enclose themselves in the West Bank and Gaza and continue to call themselves the 'sole, official representative of the Palestinian people.'

But I am convinced that no one there will listen to them. A new generation of Palestinians, all in their twenties and early thirties, all cut from the same quarry of shared struggle and kinship of vision, will surely come forward and tell these self-styled 'sole, official representatives' to move on.

If the PLO has any existence at all, it is embodied in the person of Yasser Arafat and a couple of dozen men around him now sitting in Tunis and dreaming dreams of glory about how, with help from a 'strong police force,' they will soon be running the autonomy show from Jericho and Gaza. Rejectionists in Palestinian society, not all of whom are fundamentalists or radicals.

The writer is author of *Exile's Return: The Making of a Palestinian-American*, to be published in January. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

The depressed West needs a social philosopher

By Flora Lewis

PARIS — The depression in western societies has become much more than economic. There is a Spenglerian sense of cultural decline, of a loss of capacity to keep countries going in the way we expect of them. Only a few years after the collapse of communism brought such a feeling of historic vindication, both optimism and self-confidence have melted away.

The West, like the East, is now facing the colossal bill left by the cold war, which includes moral and psychological questions about the assumptions on which free societies are based.

The drug culture, crime, the dissolution of family structure, a bleak sense of futility before life's challenges have been accumulating for a long time. But now all these failings are seen as adding up to a crisis that puts the backbone of western civilisation in doubt.

The "clash of civilisations," the next world conflict predicted by Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard, resonates with the thrill of a horror movie, offering new disasters, new enemies to chase away the boredom that Francis Fukuyama foresaw with the arrival of the "end of history."

When President Jiang Zemin of China lectures President Bill Clinton on the arrogance of western insistence that human rights are universal, many are prepared to wonder again what they mean by progress. But this comes just when more and more people in traditional societies are asking why they can't break the cycles of suffering, the ageless rhythms of oppression.

The film "Farewell My Concubine," made in China and then banned there, is an anguished cry at the discovery that even the most dramatic, rapid upheavals only perpetuate the pain when the old

methods of oppressive hierarchy are unchanged.

A film for French television based on the book "The South Slope of Liberty," written by two Egyptian intellectuals who use the pseudonym Mahmoud Hussein, identifies recognition of the individual as the key to freedom.

They understand the comforts of the traditional all-embracing community and how much it hurts to accept individual responsibility, self-reliance, the need for personal initiative. But they argue that this is the only way to emerge from the misery to which so many have so long been condemned to resign themselves.

This is not a clash of civilisations. It is a convergence demanding a reconciliation before the old dilemma of individual and community.

Man is a social animal and cannot face the travail of life and the indifference of nature without support from his kind.

Tender for purchase of Cows Cooperative Society for Cattle Breeders /ZARQA

The Cooperative Society for the cattle breeders in Zarqa announces the tender to buy 1,450 pregnant heifers to produce milk provided its origin is from a single country of Holstein Frisian kind (black and white) in accordance with the conditions and specifications mentioned in the tender. Payment will be in cash through a confirmed and irrevocable letter of credit.

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Zhirinovsky's success could have ripple effect on the Third World

By G.H. Jansen

The countries of the Third World, and especially the Arabs, should be pleased that the "Liberal Democratic Party" of Vladimir Zhirinovsky did well in the recent parliamentary elections in Russia. Or should they?

To judge by the scorn

and criticisms and downright abuse now being heaped on him, with remarkable unanimity, by the western media, the Third World should avoid him like the plague, which could be one of the objectives of this campaign. According to the western media, he is a Hitler, a racist, a fascist, a Russian imperialist, a clown, a buffoon and an agent of the KGB, the Russian secret police. How else can it be asked, could he have learnt Turkish and three other foreign languages (English, French and German)?

The western media usually forgets to mention that he holds two degrees from Moscow university, one of them in law. But in the world that is under the influence of the western media Mr. Zhirinovsky has already been denounced.

The reason why the Arabs, in particular, should be happy about the emergence of someone like Mr. Zhirinovsky is that at least on one very debatable issue, the confrontation between the U.S.-led coalition and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Mr. Zhirinovsky saw Iraq's point of view to the extent of making statements in support of Saddam Hussein. Moreover, when the fighting started, he recruited volunteers to go and fight in Iraq and sent them to Baghdad by plane. It was, perhaps, a futile and even a foolish gesture which came to nothing, but at least it showed that Mr. Zhirinovsky could and did take an independent stand even against the pro-U.S. stance of his own government in U.S. eyes, to support the Iraqi enemy with whom America had been at war is unforgivable.

But should Third World countries be happy at the emergence of the Zhirinovsky phenomenon, considering that some of his views are deplorable? Since the accusations against the man are propagandistic, they should be looked at carefully. Thus, the charge of anti-Semitism, that is of anti-Jewish feeling, comes down to his questioning why members of the small Jewish minority in Russia should be so prominent and have so much influence in the media. But the same point could be made and has been made about the media in many countries and to point to that fact is not to be anti-Semitic. The plain fact is that the label "anti-Semitic" has been made so shameful that it has become a simple term of abuse, like "fascist."

Mr. Zhirinovsky is not prepared to accept that subordination as Russia's place became, as he says quite openly and repeatedly, he wants to restore the national pride of Russia, to "get Russia off its knees." And the practical consequences of that attitude and policy could be dangerous and very uncomfortable for the West, which western commentators have clearly defined: "Zhirinovsky's Russia would be much less cooperative than Yeltsin

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A

Jordan's art world undergoes metamorphosis

By Mohammad Masharga

There is quite a difference between the timid steps for the creation of a permanent gallery to display the country's art works — spearheaded by Nuha Batshon who created what came to be known as The Gallery in the early 1970s — and the 16 galleries existing in Jordan at present.

Over the past 20 years, Jordan has witnessed a real cultural, artistic and construction development and saw the establishment of several universities and colleges which continue to turn out graduates.

With the return of thousands of expatriates and the socio-economic changes in the country over the past two decades, social and aesthetic values have changed with the result that we now have a unique mixture of cultures. In this climate modern and contemporary values have not prevailed but rather intermixed and interacted with the old values.

This character has had its influence on the Jordanian plastic arts, giving it a rather special nature and determined the course of marketing the paintings in galleries where they are displayed.

The last three years have witnessed the emergence of a large number of private and commercial galleries but some artists still believe that they have not contributed anything towards improving the quality of artistic work or helping to spread the artistic culture in Jordan.

Nuha Batshon, owner of The Gallery located at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel, who continually follows up on the development of the plastic arts movement considers that the large number of galleries should be essentially linked to the concept of improving production.

She doubts that the current competition among the professional artists has contributed to the emergence of creative artists, especially in the light of the meagre financial resources at their disposal.

She pointed out that the decline in the price of paintings over the past two years resulted in a situation where artists became unable to cover the basic costs for their exhibitions.

Furthermore, the flood of a great number of Iraqi artists and the exhibitions which they held in Amman have adversely affected the quality of artwork on the

one hand, but at the same time led to unfair competition in terms of quality and prices. The great number of galleries also caused a congestion in the number of exhibitions which normally open simultaneously. For instance in one month 20 exhibitions were held in Amman preventing art lovers from visiting all the exhibitions in town. According to Batshon the great number of galleries has not encouraged artists to specialise in certain types of arts neither did it help to develop the work of one group of artists or contribute towards the establishment of special types of schools of art.

Samia Al Zaru, owner of a non-profit Open Art Studio agrees with Batshon in her assessment of the art situation in Jordan. Zaru says that the great number of galleries is something unusual and has in no way contributed to the development of the Jordanian plastic art movement.

Noting that a number of non-artists and intruders on the world of art have entered this field, Zaru says that these newcomers have been trying to impose their taste in art and their own concept of shallow artistic culture through exhibitions.

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

Like Batshon, Zaru maintains that the wave of Iraqi artists invading Jordan's world of art has had its positive effect only at the beginning on the quality of art, because their presence represented a challenge to the Jordanian plastic art. But at a later stage, and in view of the flood of Iraqi artists in Jordan, especially in the past year, such presence was no more beneficial to the art world in Jordan.

Zarou says she believes that the great number of galleries mushrooming in the country is an expression of the growing need of the local community for art work, noting that professional artists are on the increase largely due to the increase in the number of graduates of art schools.

Saad Hourani, owner of the Baladna Gallery, and Hassan Darwishi, director of the Alia Art Gallery, hold different views from those of Batshon and Zaru.

They believe that the increase in the number of galleries has contributed towards the progress of the plastic art movement.

No longer are the Jordanian artists restricted to certain tastes. They are now able to display different works of art.

Furthermore, they say the plastic artists in the past two years have faced a strong competition that whetted their tastes and encouraged them to produce good quality art in form and in essence.

The influence of Iraqi artists has not been a great one to encourage the creation of Galleries and has not affected prices of art work and paintings. And indeed from the Baladna Gallery's experiences, the Syrian artists' work displayed there attracted more public interest, Hourani and Darwishi added.

Darwishi, a Jordanian artist, says the great number of exhibitions by Iraqi artists has led to the upgrading of the level of taste in the arts in general, particularly in view of the variety of schools of art which they represent.

"I consider their presence as a gain for the Jordanian art movement," said Darwishi. Noting that the Iraqi art has deep traditions and is considered the best in the Arab region.

According to Noel Favreliere, the director of the French Cultural Centre in Amman, the presence of a great number of non-Jordanian Arab art artists in Amman has contributed to the stimulation of the plastic art movement and offered hitherto unknown ideas in art work, exactly similar to a situation that resulted from the migration of world known artists like Pablo Picasso from Spain and the Russian artist Marc Chagall to Paris. These artists have brought with them new ideas in art which enriched the art movement in France, noted Favreliere.

Another phenomenon which Favreliere referred to was the emergence of a new class of artists from the middle class including professionals and teachers and small businessmen. He said that this class represents the best group of art lovers taking the place of the very rich class of the 1980s.

Owners and managers of galleries and artists are in agreement that the past few years have witnessed a sharp and growing interest in the purchase of works of

art, noting that this was partly due to the fact that the wealthy class in Jordan have been giving due attention to luxurious homes and choosing artists to carry out their internal designs based on imported ideas.

Batshon says that the involvement of internal design and decor in the construction of modern homes has opened the door for the wealthy class to buy more art works and paintings with the view to beautifying their residence to give their homes a social and cultural character reflecting the taste of the owners.

Artist Adnan Al Sharif of the Plastic Arts Association said that some galleries have been specialising in the display of small-size paintings, a move that enabled limited-income groups among the Jordanian society to purchase the work at reasonable prices.

He said that indeed his three last exhibitions of small size paintings were among his more successful works in terms of sale.

But he noted that plastic art continues to draw most of profits from a limited group of rich people in Jordan.

"One can still hear the new class of rich people boasting of the large sums they had paid for obtaining their paintings," according to Zaru who noted that such development has contributed to the development of plastic art.

In order to encourage continued sale of paintings, Batshon suggested that galleries come to an understanding with the artists to reduce the price of their paintings so that intellectuals and art lovers of various classes can buy them.

Jordan still lacks proper plastic art critics, who have failed to appear despite the increase in the number of galleries and their exhibitions.

Indeed art critics in advanced nations have helped to highlight art work and contributed towards raising the price of paintings.

Zarou says that art criticism has failed to contribute towards rectifying the course of the arts movement and it is regrettable that men now dominate the art movement in Jordan despite the fact that they know nothing about art criticism and its rules. Artists say that the country now boast 16 galleries and 60 plastic artists. They note that the last painting that has been displayed was valued at JD 60,000 and painted by an artist of Polish origin.

Child addicts on the rise in Bombay

By Madhu Nainan

Agence France Presse

BOMBAY — Anil Pawar

collects trash from the streets of Bombay and sells it to scrap dealers to support his glue-sniffing habit.

A typical day for the scrawny 12-year-old begins at dawn when Anil and three other boys who live with him under a shop awning set out with large gunny sacks slung over their shoulders.

The boys spend the morning scrapping for metal, paper and plastic in a several block area they jealously guard as their "territory".

By noon, the tired and grimy boys call it a day and return to their patch of pavement in tando, south Bombay.

They sort through their collection and sell it to a nearby scrap merchant.

On a good day, Anil pockets as much as 80 rupees, nearly \$30.

He and his mates gobble down a meal of flat bread and curry and head for the store, where each boy pays 10 rupees (\$33 cents) for a 50-gram tin of glue.

Their next stop is an abandoned bus station where the boys huddle together over their precious pots of glue.

"I sniff the glue until evening or late at night," said Anil. "It makes me feel good. It is better and cheaper than brown sugar (crude heroin)."

Anil and the other boys are among the estimated 3,000 child addicts living on the streets of Bombay, India's financial capital.

"This is the highest number in the country," said Dr. Yusuf Merchant of the Drug Abuse Information, Rehabilitation and Research Centre (DAIIRC). "There were virtually none a year ago."

Dr. Merchant said glue, cough syrup and sleeping tablets were other substances used by pre-teenage children looking for a cheap high. Petrol-sniffing was also on the rise, he said.

"Addicts dip a piece of cloth into the petrol and sniff it for the kick. An excess causes diarrhoea, loss of appetite and the child wastes away to death," he said.

DAIIRC recently did a

Christmas in Japan — a night of romantic encounters

By Didier Faureaux

Agence France Presse

TOKYO — Young lovers in Japan, a country of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, like to celebrate Christmas with a night of amorous exchanges in luxury hotels.

For young men and women to be without a partner at Christmas, which lacks religious significance here but is highly exploited commercially, is a loss of face and a special night to prepare for months ahead.

Tokyo's big hotels, particularly those near Tokyo Bay and the Disneyland theme park 30 minutes

drive from the city centre, are booked out for the period from September.

The "lovers' Christmas" theme, launched five years ago at the height of Japan's consumer-spending boom, has weathered the batterings of recession and the tendency now of Japanese to think twice before laying out cash on anything superfluous.

But, according to the magazine *Spirit*, the "presento" or gift, has become more modest — costing perhaps 25,000 yen (\$230) rather than the 48,000 yen (\$440) typical in 1991.

A young man who invites a girl to celebrate Christmas with him will spend as much as 100,000 yen (\$900) on a hotel room, good dinner and a gift.

"This year, as last, our hotel has been fully-booked since September for the Christmas celebration," said hotel spokesman Koji Yamazaki.

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Young Japanese, most of whom live with their parents until they marry, have to come up with pretexts for spending Christmas away from home. It would be unthinkable for them to declare their real intentions.

"Fortunately, I always manage to find a friend who is prepared to say I spent the night at her place," said Michiko, 27, who will be celebrating her third Christmas.

For restauranteurs, the Christmas-for-lovers is also a boon. They outstrip each other with ideas to attract customers with festive menus, often French cuisine with price going as high as 35,000 yen (\$320) per person, knowing that a young lovebird will be ready to impress his girl.

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Strict new law drives abortion underground in Poland

By Susanne Hoell

Reuter

WARSAW — Nearly a year after Poland passed a strict new abortion law, many of the fears voiced at the time by liberal politicians, women's groups and ordinary people have come true.

The law, approved after the Roman Catholic Church backed moves to reverse 1956 Communist legislation, has driven abortion underground and added a dimension to the country's secret economy.

Pro-abortion activists say hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Polish women use private agencies which arrange abortion trips abroad or seek help from doctors at home who are known to terminate pregnancies.

"Women travel to (the Russian region of) Kaliningrad, to Slovakia, to the Netherlands or to Spain. But you can also do it in Poland — illegally of course," says Jolanta Plak-

wicz of the Polish Feminist Association (PSF).

The PSF and other groups are fighting for a change in the law, saying it is hypocritical. They support an initiative by a group of women members of parliament to legalise abortions for social reasons.

Ms. Nowicka, who runs a hot-line for women, says the new law made it difficult to get abortions even in cases permitted under the law.

She recalls a woman in the southern Polish town of Krakow who became pregnant after a rape and went for an abortion in her local hospital.

The doctors refused, saying they no longer carried out abortions, even though she had a doctor's certificate.

Prices for abortions range from seven million to 20 million zlotys (\$350 to

\$1,000), compared with the average monthly income of about four million zlotys (\$200).

A trip abroad is even more expensive.

An agency in Lublin in eastern Poland advertised summer weekend trips to the Ukraine for eight million zlotys (about \$400).

Ms. Nowicka estimates several hundred women have gone abroad for abortions since the new law was passed.

Often the husband or lover pays for the operation and takes the woman to the hospital, but not all men want their child to be aborted.

In mid-November a man alerted the police in the western Polish town of Poznan, saying his girlfriend had just had an abortion in a private practice. His call

triggered one of the first investigations into the illegal trade.

Police searched the doctor's dustbins and found human tissue. Its examination should tell whether the woman had an abortion or a miscarriage, the Warsaw newspaper *Zycie Warszawy* quoted the Poznan prosecutor as saying.

"All this is pure hypocrisy," says Barbara Labuda, a deputy of the Democratic Union — the former government coalition partner — and a campaigner for a more liberal law.

She bad about 50 other women members of the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, have drawn up a bill which would allow abortions for social and psychological reasons. They want it discussed in parliament.

The perfect Arabic

By Jean-Claude Elias

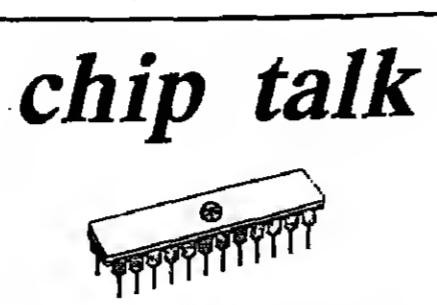
The modern computer was developed in the United States and Great Britain. Its "mother tongue" was therefore English. When the whole world started using computers, it became necessary to give the machines the possibility to process all national languages.

Those using Latin characters do not present any difficulty. They have the same characters set and are written in the same direction, that is from left to right. Implementing different characters and writing orientations was more difficult and presented the specialists with a new challenge. Arabic for instance, took a relatively long time to be well integrated in the world of data processing.

Arabic became available in the mid-seventies on large systems, and in the early eighties on personal computer (PC). The first implementations however did not satisfy the users. Using Arabic on early PCs meant accepting poor printing quality, slower machines and very complicated processing. Surprisingly, typewriters with excellent Arabic had been around for a long time.

By the late eighties, most problems had been solved, Arabic on computers was running well and became available to all users whether of main frames or PCs.

Once the experts had mastered the art, the users asked for more. Good handling of Arabic was not enough. Bilingual, mainly Arabic-English, processing



became in high demand. Being able to write English text with Arabic words inserted in them, and vice versa, was a feature that most users wanted. The additional technical difficulty did not scare the specialists and bilingual processing is now a common feature in most software.

If Arabic is now nearly perfect in the processing of plain data, it still leaves the purists of Arabic calligraphy thirsty. For unless one uses an advanced word processing programme and the best laser printer, the quality of the printout does not satisfy all. For the most demanding, even the "Arabic Word for Windows" programme and a laser printer do not always produce the result they expect. They believe, righteously, that a lot remains to be done in the characters drawing, in the curved parts of some letters and in the way letters are linked.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammed A. Shuaqir

STRANGE BUT TRUE

- ★ The oldest pharmacy in Europe is still in the use today in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, which opened in 1317. They also opened an Old People's Home in 1347, and a medical service in 1301.
- ★ Milan cathedral took 579 years to build and seats a congregation of 40,000.
- ★ The archer fish can hit an insect up to 122 cm away with drops of water squirted from its mouth.
- ★ It takes 5 tonnes of rock to produce a piece of gold the size of a trouser button.
- ★ In most Dutch cities you can see herring stalls. The Dutch love to eat them there on the streets.
- ★ Natives of New Guinea often smoke their home-made cigarettes from the side.

★ ★ ★ ★

SAY IT IN ARABIC

AT THE HOTEL

- Which is the best hotel you recommend?
Ma heya ahsan al-fanadiq allati toosi biha?
- I prefer Jordan/Regency/Mariotte hotel.
Osfaddil fandok al-Ordon/Regency/Mariotte.
- Is the service good there?
Hal al-khidma muntaza honak?
- Yes, and the rates are exceptionally moderate.
Na'am wal-asaar bisifa khassa mu'tadila.
- Then, I must make the reservation beforehand.
Ezan, yajib an shifaz mukaddaman.
- I'll stay a couple of days at least.
Sawfa qeem yawmian ala akal.
- You're welcome, sir. Marhaban beka ya sayyedi.

★ ★ ★ ★

YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

JEWELS: To dream of jewellery of any kind is always a bad sign: love troubles or business dangers.

JOLLITY: To dream of jollity and fun by night is good for those about to marry; to the poor a sign of good; to the rich a sign of trouble and loss.

JOURNEY: (Making one) Peace and contentment at home.

JUDGE: A bad dream: Beware of slander and malice.

JUG: (Drinking from one) Robust health and wholesome pleasures.

JUMP: To dream of jumping is unpropitious, foretelling obstacles that prevent fulfilment of a desire.

★ ★ ★ ★

HOROSCOPIC CHART

Here are the birth dates and characteristics of persons born between the dates mentioned. Since astrology is not infallible, do not take all these characteristics too seriously.

WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

Dec. 22nd to Jan. 20th

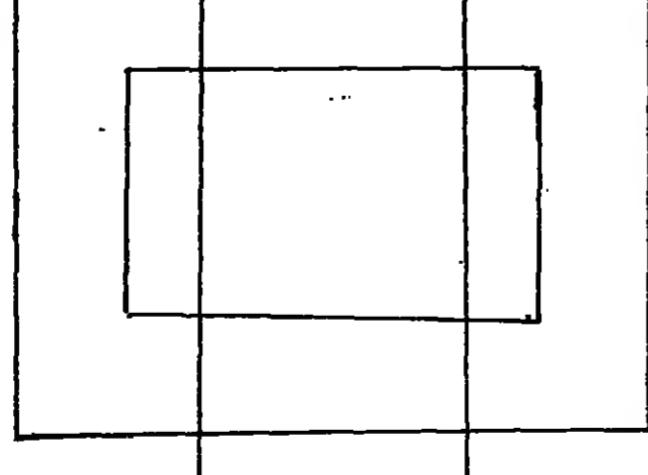
People born during this period have considerable mental ability and a keen business instinct. They are fond of the imaginative arts. They are proud: they like their own way and they see that they get it. Generally speaking, they are better fitted to lead than to follow others.

However, they do not take kindly to changes of any kind, and are annoyed by new-fangled ideas. They do not want the advice of other people and often resent it. They do not strike out in new directions and they avoid taking risks. They lack "push".

To these people we say:

Don't wait for opportunities-make them.

Don't let your pride persuade you to keep on the wrong road rather than turn back.



Thoughts for this week

In a time of war... the task of news-writers is easy: they have nothing to do but to tell that the battle is expected, and afterwards that a battle has been fought, in which we and our friends, whether conquering or conquered, did all, and our enemies did nothing — Samuel Johnson, English critic (1709-1784).

Education is a private matter between the person and the world of knowledge and experience, and has little to do with school or college — Lillian Smith, American writer and social critic (1897-1966).

Rewards and punishments are the lowest form of education — Chang-Tzu, Chinese philosopher (C. 369 B.C.-C. 286 B.C.)

Take these broken wings

By E. Yaghi

While Westerners rushed out into winter snows to purchase pine trees for the Christmas season, a gray-haired woman wearing a yellowish white head-covering and a faded, tattered, black robe, gently placed a wreath of scarlet poinsettias on a grave that occupied a quiet corner of their few acres of land north of the hills of Bethlehem. "We lived through six years of the intifada and now when we thought we'd finally taste freedom for the first time, you were shot down by a Jewish adolescent settler. It's all so useless, so pointless." She wailed to the newly turned mound of dark dirt.

It was only such a short while ago that her husband Abu Khalil lived, plowed and worked on the land that he loved, she thought. She sat down near his grave as the bells of the little town of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, softly chimed in the distance, in celebration of Christmas Day. She grabbed the edge of her shawl and rubbed away the tears that dripped down her face and spattered onto the fresh grave of her once sole supporter in the harsh existence the occupation forced on all and spoke in a voice choked with emotion: "A few weeks ago, I brought you your lunch while you worked in the field and called you saying, 'Come Abu Khalil, take a break from your work and relax for a while. I have some fresh bread which tastes delicious with this morning's butter and homegrown honey'."

She remembered how he threw down his hoe and walked over to where she had spread the lunch out on a blanket over the good coffee coloured earth which her husband inherited from his father and his grandfather before him. Crystals of sweat ran down his rosy slightly wrinkled face. He reached in his jacket pocket and wiped away the beads of perspiration with a blue cotton kerchief, and exclaimed gratefully: "I do declare, Im Khalil, you do make the best bread and butter this side of heaven. You sure know how to gratify a man's stomach! Pour me some tea, will you please?"

They had laughed together beneath the graying sky and hardly noticed the chill wind which blew towards them from the silent town of Bethlehem as if issuing a warning of an ominous omen. She had scolded her spouse in a gentle voice. "You work too hard my husband. Leave some for tomorrow. You're not as young as you used to be. At our age, it is better to take care of our health for it is the best weapon we have against the ill fortunes of life."

"You know me, my dear. I hate to be idle, for idleness is the begetter of senility. As long as I can keep these old rheumatic joints working and moving then I might ensure being able to get myself up the next morning but if I spend the remainder of my days flat on

my back, then I will age much faster and even my mind will begin to deteriorate. My wings might be broken, but I can still try and some day you and I will learn to fly again and will hear voices sing of freedom for our country. There will come a time when guns must turn into ploughshares and hate into tolerance. If we are lucky, we will live to see such a brave day when that war monster dragon with his red glaring eyes will be slain and his fire breathing breath will no more scorch the hearts of innocent people. Thank you for your lunch, your effort and your time, Im Khalil but you have kept me too long away from my chores. I want to finish before dusk."

She watched as he slowly got up and returned to his hoeing. She picked up the remnants of their meal and turned once more to observe her husband. He had deserted his digging and had climbed up on his small borrowed tractor when she heard a shot whine like a banshee through the peach trees and suddenly Abu Khalil slumped over the steering wheel. She ran to him as fast as she could and climbed up on the wheel and pulled on his shoulders and screamed: "No! It can't be!"

She felt something warm trickle over her hand and horrified, she withdrew it and stared down at a gaping hole in her husband's back. She struggled with his stiffening body and half-carried, half-dragged him off the tractor and laid him on the dark ground. For a moment he opened his eyes and said with a gasping sound that rattled like death: "Take these broken wings, Im Khalil and learn to fly where the song of freedom is sung. I have now seen the great monster death which I always feared and know him to be only death, nothing more."

And she remembered how witnesses informed her that a Jewish teenager was seen running from the scene of his crime, carrying a shotgun. But oh, he had taken away in one instant her greatest treasure in life, her husband who had never harmed anyone. Another victim of the flood of hate that envelops the citizens of the Holy Land. As she sat mourning her fate as well as the death of Abu Khalil in the corner of her land beside his grave, Christmas shoppers in Western countries hustled to and from over glistening snow to the tune of piped Christmas carols with red and green ribboned presents bundled under their arms to place under tinsel pine trees in the spirit of peace and goodwill to mankind as far over the ocean of tears, agony and pain, mothers and wives like Im Khalil wondered if there ever would be a day when comprehensive and just peace could reign the land. She spoke to the mound of still silent earth: "Yes from dirt we came and to dirt we return. You gave me your broken wings, Abu Khalil, but you forgot to teach me how to fly. My greatest wish is to now join you where you lie, for all my hopes are buried with you and I have nothing left to live for."

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 23

10:00 News In English

8:30 Family Matters

10:20 Feature Film — Call Of The Wild

The Big Fix

Starring: Rick Schroder and Richard Newman

Steve is more than willing to help Eddie in his mid-year exams, only if Eddie promises to fix him up with a girl.

9:10 Reasonable Doubts

The movie recalls the adventures of a young man who moves north to Alaska, in search for gold; other gold-diggers were his enemies. His dog was his friend.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Fighter For Hire

Starring: Michael Beck and Nancy Kwan

8:30 You Bet Your Life

An expert in the martial arts is hired by the American government to work on the release of American scientists held hostage.

Friday, Dec. 24

9:10 Thirtysomething

Melissa & Men

Melissa's successful photographic exhibition is overshadowed by her depression over lost and failed relationships with men.

10:00 News In English

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Alien Years

10:20 The Men Who Killed Kennedy

11:10 Are You Being Served

The Witnesses

Thirty years after the Kennedy assassination, those eyewitnesses, close to the killing suffer their own haunting images from that dreadful day.

5:30 The Fanelli Boys

11:10 The Golden Palace

There's too much arguments and fights among the boys: Uncle Angelo suggests the boys go and see a shrink.

11:10 The Golden Palace

9:00 Da Beat's On

It's Beginning To Look A Lot Less Like Christmas

Muhammad Al Jazireh brings you the latest pop songs from the charts in America and Europe.

A group of newly-divorced and depressed people make reservations to stay at the Golden Palace on one condition: That no signs of Christmas Eve celebrations be present. But the occasion proves too holy and grand to be missed.

9:30 Perspectives

Our weekly talk show, with host Murad Hammam

Gloria Estefan in concert Monday at 9:10

Monday, Dec. 27

her mother live a hard life. But, things change for the better.

8:30 Delta

10:00 News In English

A Christmas Tale

10:20 Feature Film — The Wilderness Family

The Robinsons move away from city life and decide to live in the country. They find that the country is more than what they expected.

Wednesday, Dec. 29

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

The Cosmic Cow vs The Oval Office

Henry has angered the Oval Office with an insult that appeared in his latest edition of The Cosmic Cow. He's been asked to apologize, or get fired.

9:10 Documentary

10:00 News In English

10:20 Till Murder Do Us Part

Starring: Meredith Baxter and Steven Collins

9:10 Act Of Will

A hysterical wife resorts to a double murder as the price for a marriage that was broken after sixteen years.

New westerns: Politically correct, accurate

By Francois Robert
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood producers are preparing an onslaught of new-genre western films that meet the criteria of being politically correct and more historically accurate than their counterparts of past years.

The new wave is prompted in part by the box office and Academy Awards success of Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* in 1990 and last year's *Unforgiven* directed by and starring

Clint Eastwood.

One of the first in the series, *Geronimo*, directed by Walter Hill, includes native American Wes Studi in the title role — although he is a Cherokee, not Apache like Geronimo — and 200 other Indian actors.

The other Indians are largely Mescaleros, since there are few Chiricahua Apaches living. As in *Dances With Wolves*, the actors speak in their native tongue, with subtitles used for viewers.

"We want to do away with misconceptions, talk to

people about the truth of American Indian people and their history," said Sonny Skyhawk, a native American consultant for *Geronimo*, which is now showing in U.S. cinemas.

Two classic-style shoot 'em up westerns due out soon are based on the life of the legendary lawman Wyatt Earp.

George Cosmatos' *Tombstone*, due for U.S. release this month, with Kurt Russell in the role of Earp, contains the standard western fare of showdowns between the bad guys and

good guys.

Wyatt Earp, by Lawrence Kasdan, with Kevin Costner in the title role, is scheduled for release next July in the United States.

Other films under production take a new look at the role of women in the American west frontier, including Sam Raimi's *The Quick And The Dead*, with Sharon Stone starring as a woman seeking to avenge the killing of her family.

Bad Girls, directed by Jonathan Kaplan, features Drew Barrymore and Madeleine Stowe and

Andie MacDowell in a film about prostitutes who leave Colorado to start a new life in Texas.

Additionally, Hollywood is working on productions of *Even Cowgirls Get The Blues*, *Lightning Jack*, and a film inspired by an old TV series, *Maverick*, starring Mel Gibson.

Television is not being left out. The Cable Turner Network Television, which recently aired its own version of *Geronimo*, is preparing a 20-episode series on American Indian history.

Fathers of 'tropicalia' still in vanguard

By Gary Richman
The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Twenty-six years ago, two rising young musicians mixed Brazil's lilting rhythms with rock 'n' roll, added poetic lyrics with an attitude and made history.

"Tropicalia" became a benchmark in Brazilian pop music. It launched a style of music — "tropicalismo" — and propelled its creators, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, to international stardom and into exile by a right-wing military regime.

Now, the two have teamed up again for a commemorative recording called — what else? — *Tropicalia 2* and, once again, they've taken the music world by storm.

Tropicalia 2 sold out its first pressing of 60,000 copies in just two weeks, a huge success by local standards and a boon for Brazil's recession-struck recording industry.

"The record of the year," Tarik De Souza, perhaps Brazil's most respected music critic, wrote of the album. "It was the dynamic duo's way of celebrating

one revolution by creating another."

In the politically charged lead song *Haiti*, Gil and Veloso paint a brutal portrait of racism and police brutality over a pulsing rap rhythm.

"No one is a citizen," the lyrics throat. "Think of *Haiti*, pray for *Haiti*, *Haiti* is here." Then, a contradiction offering redemption: "Haiti is not here."

Rap and African rhythms are present again in a stirring cover of the Jimi Hendrix classic *Wait Until Tomorrow*.

Percussion is a show apart in *Tropicalia 2*. The drum corps is commanded by dred-locked wild man Carlinhos Brown, whose unique "Timbalada" sound is drawn from the percussion hands of Salvador, the capital of Afro-Brazilian culture on the north east coast.

"Gil and I represent Afro-Brazilians," Veloso, who is a Mulatto, said proudly. "And in Brazil the mixture of all races has a depth found nowhere else in the world."

African-rooted mysticism

is a strong influence in their music. Many songs are driven by the pulsing drums of candomble religious rites and include references to the "Orixas," the pantheon of African deities.

Gil, who is black, also borrows heavily from Nigerian juju and Jamaican reggae.

Gil and Caetano are...

... bringing the future into the present," popular singer Elba Ramalho said in an interview. "They are our musical mentors, always pointing to new directions."

Ney Matogrosso, another popular singer, called the pair "the great alchemists of national thought, the artists who most influenced the behaviour of the country, that affected the Brazilian mentality."

In an industry dominated by American record labels, Gil and Caetano have remained in the vanguard. Their songs compete on the charts with the heavily publicised singles from Madonna and Michael Jackson.

At a show this fall to kick off *Tropicalia 2* thousands of teenagers packed Rio's

downtown Samadrome Parade Grounds and sang along with the pair's old hits written before many of the listeners were born.

Gil and Caetano are to Brazil what Bob Dylan is to the United States and the Beatles are to England," said concert-goer Gustavo Barbosa, 43. "They brought us into contact with the new youth counterculture in North America and Europe."

Tropicalia was the musical expression of an artistic new wave in South America's largest nation. It also expressed the rebellion of a generation bridling under the censorship imposed by the generals who seized power in 1964.

"The *bossa nova* had already been taken to the maximum state of perfection in the '60s by Joao Gilberto and Tom Jobim," Veloso said in an interview. "We had to innovate to keep busy."

"Caetano and I decided that 'rockifying' music here would be a good thing to do," Gil added.

The two exude an infectious good humour and

political irrelevance.

American artist honoured at Russia's Hermitage Museum

By Susan Gallagher
The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — For

sculptor Tim Holmes, recognition came thousands of miles from his Montana home, at an acclaimed museum known for its collections of art by Rembrandt, Michelangelo and other masters.

After years of hearing his metal work wasn't good enough for the major museums of the United States, Holmes has drawn raves for his show at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. He is the first contemporary American sculptor to be honoured with a solo exhibit.

"Sculptures by Tim Holmes deserve being displayed in the best museums of the world," Mikhail Piotrovsky, director of the Hermitage, told a St. Petersburg newspaper.

In London, the two continued their musical experimentation. They wove the rhythmic, upbeat rhythms from their native Salvador with the music industry's new technological advances.

They returned home in

1972 and teamed up with Veloso's sister, Maria Bethania, and young Gal Costa, who went on to become top billed stars in their own right. The result was the *Doces Barbares* — Portuguese for sweet Barbarians — and another huge success.

However, Brazilian leftists complained that the feel-good music of Gil and Veloso was alienated and politically irrelevant.

Holmes' credits include

an ongoing commission by

Physicians for Social Re-

sponsibility. The produces

"the healing touch," grace-

ful hands with two fingers

ending in doves, which the

doctors present semiannual-

ly as a peace award. Reci-

pients include former Presi-

dent Jimmy Carter, Dr.

Benjamin Spock, Dr. Jonas

Salk, Norman Cousins and

George Kennan, former

U.S. ambassador to the

Soviet Union.

Holmes' art has many themes: Pain, disappointment, war and peace, love, inequality, the mother-and-child bond. He comes from a long line of Methodist ministers, and religion is never far from his work.

"I try to raise some life and death issues," he said. "I think part of an artist's job is to act like a town crier." Holmes describes art as "the clear voice across the tumult" in each genera-

tion. Pieces in St. Petersburg include *Bus Stop In The First World*, on the consumptive way of life in developed nations; *The Blast*, on the nuclear threat; *China Peace*, on the freedom movement in China; and *The Healing Touch*.

The exhibit catalogue includes Holmes' comments about each piece, but he told readers that trying to penetrate the meaning of art with words "is like trying to split wood with a begonia petal."

Some of the propulsion in his career has come from the Montana Logging And Ballet Co., which presents travelling shows of political satire and music. Holmes, one of the four performers in the act, shows his sculpture at these, and he has gained some followers that way.

The Logging And Ballet Co. began about 20 years ago as a recruiting gimmick at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, where Holmes was a student. He earned a fine arts degree there, went on to art school in London and travelled to some of Europe's leading museums to see what he could learn.



Visitors to Dr. Goffredo Matthes' museum in Milan learn how to recognise fake artwork by using simple tricks

is the natural essence of real amber, which is made from 100 million-year-old deposits of fallen trees. If the odor is acrid, put your money back in your pocket. It is sure to be synthetic.

"This test is foolproof," said Dr. Matthes. "There is a great deal of fake amber around."

The same test works for ivory. The genuine article is odorless when a heated pin is pressed into it. Fake ivory gives off a strong smell of chlorine, from the synthetic resin.

If old paintings are your passion, look closely at the "crackle" or cracked effect on the painting's surface. It should be more pronounced at the edges, near the frame, since this is the point of greatest stress. On an artificially aged canvas, the effect will be more haphazard.

Visitors to the Milan museum learn that forgers obtain the crackle effect by rolling a canvas up and putting it into a warm oven. Colours are also a good pointer, both for paintings and for ceramics. Buyers should beware of anything that is too brightly painted, however.

Plunge a heated needle into the amber where it will not show and sniff the smell that is released. If it is an odor of woody resin, you are on the right track. This

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Secret talks

(Continued from page 1)

should be given a genuine feeling that the process is enough deep and significant," Mr. Zvili said.

"That's exactly what (we) are trying to do in Paris, to reach a system on which we can ensure Israel's needs on security and give the Palestinians evidence of the political change. I hope we will succeed," he added.

Mr. Zvili, who is secretary-general of the Labour Party, said the meeting with Mr. Arafat was "very interesting." He said he was in Tunis on a "political personal visit" and insisted the negotiations were in France.

The Versailles negotiations, if they succeed, should lead to a meeting in the next few days between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin, opening the way for a global agreement on autonomy, sources said.

The talks were taking place at the luxury Trianon Palace hotel, the sixth floor of which has been taken over and is under heavy police guard, with journalists being kept out.

Some delegation members took a break in pouring rain in the nearby Versailles park and posed for press photographers.

The two sides are still at odds over the size of the area around Jericho that will fall under Palestinian control, the question of Jewish settlements in Jericho and the Gaza Strip as well as border crossings.

The Trianon Palace, which has one of the best restaurants in the Paris area, has often been used for secret negotiations. On Tuesday, French foreign ministry spokesman Richard Dugue said the French would give no information on the talks.

In the Trianon Palace are all the key figures involved in the secret negotiations last summer.

Anti-Aideed clans vow to create government

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somali militias opposed to faction leader Mohammad Farah Aideed said Wednesday they would try to govern "with or without him."

But they left the door open for him to participate.

Aweys Haji Yusef said the "group of 12," a loose alliance of factions linked to several Aideed's most bitter rival Ali Mahdi Mohammad, intended

to press ahead with the formation of a transitional national council (TNC) by January 15.

But Mr. Aweys, Mr. Ali Mahdi's top adviser, said: "We don't want to form the TNC without him (Aideed). There is a seat on the council waiting for him. But we do not want him to hold the country to ransom."

"Everybody today wants no

more fighting and we have to take a most painful decision for Somalia to try and accommodate everyone."

Mr. Aweys also predicted renewed clan fighting after the March withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Mr. Aweys said the United Nations should never have lifted the order for Gen. Aideed's arrest issued after the

June 5 slaying of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers, allegedly by his militia.

Fighting between Mr. Ali Mahdi and Gen. Aideed over the mantle off dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, who was overthrown in January 1991, killed and maimed at least 30,000 people and completely destroyed the port capital of Mogadishu.

GCC summit

(Continued from page 1)

welcomed a statement they said had been issued by the Tehran government calling for peaceful solution of the issue.

Iraq's ruling party newspaper Al Thawra Wednesday attacked the summit as "fever-

ish hallucination."

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait refused any dealings with Iraq while Saddam Hussein remains in power. They have lobbied permanent Security Council members to keep United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq in place.

On the Middle East peace pro-

cess, the GCC said it welcomed Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord as a "first step on the path to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement."

The final statement did not mention the GCC's position on a possible lifting of the Arab boycott of Israel.

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Fighting rages in Sarajevo, central Bosnia; talks begin in Brussels

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The United Nations said Wednesday Serb gunners pounded Sarajevo and Muslim-led forces launched an offensive in central Bosnia as peace talks in Brussels offered some hope of a breakthrough.

While Bosnian rivals negotiated over a proposed peace map, Serb soldiers fired artillery rounds on the besieged Bosnian capital in the heaviest attack in two months. A U.N. spokesman in the city said Wednesday.

In central Bosnia, Muslim-led Bosnian army soldiers launched an artillery and infantry assault on Croats in central Bosnia near Vitez. U.N. officials and witnesses said.

Reuter journalists in the Croat-dominated walled town of Vitez said residents spotted Bosnian army troops moving towards Croat positions before dawn Wednesday, triggering fighting.

Doctors at nearby Nova Bila field hospital said one child had been killed by shrapnel and 28 people wounded, including 23 Croat soldiers.

United Nations observers recorded 1,500 shells landing in Sarajevo Tuesday and said 226

rounds hit the shell-shattered city overnight until 9 a.m. (0800 GMT) Wednesday.

Six were killed and 26 wounded in the capital in Tuesday's fighting. U.N. Major Idesbald Van Bieseboeck said.

At peace discussions in Brussels, international mediator Lord Owen said he was pushing for a settlement of the 20-month civil war by Christmas.

"We are absolutely determined if it is at all possible to reach a settlement before Christmas," Lord Owen told reporters.

Lord Owen, his fellow mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg and Serb, Croat and Muslim leaders flew from Geneva after talks Tuesday that focused on new Serb-Croat plans to partition Bosnia.

Although Bosnia's Muslims said in Geneva early Wednesday that they could not agree to the Serb-Croat plan, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Sacirbey, said the map was unacceptable but represented a sign of progress.

"We are certainly closer. We still have not managed to close

that final gap, but there is a real possibility that something positive could come out of all of this," Mr. Sacirbey said on British television.

Serbs were mainly responsible for the heavy shelling of Sarajevo Tuesday and Wednesday, Maj. Van Bieseboeck, a spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said.

"It was the heaviest level of shelling in the past two months. We can only assume they are trying to put pressure on the negotiations," he said.

Most of the shelling Tuesday occurred to the north and west of the city, in the suburbs of Zuc and Rajlovac. Shelling Wednesday morning centred again on Zuc, a desolate hilltop battlefield overlooking key roadways in and around the city.

Maj. Van Bieseboeck's regular morning press briefing was punctuated by the sound of regular explosions on nearby Zuc. Reporters leaving the U.N. compound could see shells slamming into a residential hillside less than 2,000 metres to the north.

Maj. Van Bieseboeck also expressed concern over Serb refusal to allow humanitarian

aid convoys to pass through their checkpoints on the way to civilians trapped by fighting.

He said the Serbs had stopped a convoy to the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde Tuesday and had turned around most of a convoy heading from Belgrade to Sarajevo.

The European Community (EC) threatened Wednesday to tighten economic sanctions against Serbia unless the Serbs make territorial concessions to end the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The threat was made by Willy Claes, Belgian chairman of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers.

He was speaking during a meeting between EC foreign ministers and the leaders of the warring parties in Bosnia.

Maj. Claes also called for a Christmas truce, saying: "We dare to hope that Christmas will be marked by a cessation of hostilities and by a humanitarian truce, which could subsequently be consolidated."

He said the EC ministers intended to identify the parties holding up the peace process at the end of Wednesday's meeting if there was no breakthrough.



Inhabitants of the flooded village of Borgharen in the south of the Netherlands are evacuated from their homes (AFP photo)

Floodwaters hit new levels in Europe

BONN (AFP) — Floodwaters have hit hard in at least four Western European countries after the worst rain in decades, leaving four dead in Germany where a sudden freeze could make things worse only a few days before Christmas.

Forecasts of more rain caused worries both there and in Belgium, the Netherlands and France after hundreds were evacuated or marooned on the upper floors of their homes awaiting rescue.

The Rhine and its tributaries hit record high early Wednesday, flooding Heidelberg and Sarrebruck and threatening Cologne where it was rising eight centimetres (3.2 inches) an hour. Firemen feared Cologne's old town would be flooded by nightfall.

The B9 Highway between Bonn and Koblentz was closed at several points and shipping was stopped on the Rhine, with no ferry crossings on the 60-kilometre (37-miles) stretch south of the capital where there are no bridges.

In the historic old town of Heidelberg, the Neckar River

was dropping after hitting its high of the century overnight at 9.8-metres (more than 32 feet), forcing firemen to evacuate several people stranded in ground-floor apartments.

The Saar had risen to 9.2 metres (30 feet), nearly seven metres (23 feet) above its normal level, flooding several areas of Sarrebruck.

Bavaria in southern Germany was also under water with extensive damage reported in several cities and communications lines down.

On Tuesday, three motorists and a building worker were killed in gales and torrential rains in Germany.

In Belgium, tens of thousands of homes were flooded in a 50-kilometre (30-mile) strip along the border from the coast to Luxembourg, forcing hundreds to leave for dryer grounds. Roads were blocked and the canals swollen as the Venice of the north.

Though water level along the southern strip were starting to drop Wednesday, the Meuse in eastern Belgium was rising

Wednesday four centimetres (1.6 inches) an hour, officials said.

On the Dutch side of the Meuse, about 30 of the worst-hit residents in the village of Iteren were evacuated overnight, while five Dutch navy helicopters tried to reach others after strong currents swept a rescue hovercraft off track.

The 1,500 residents in Iteren and three other nearby villages have been living in their upper stories for the last few days.

In Maastricht, water was 15 centimetres (about six inches) high on some streets though authorities said the situation was under control.

Flooding also hit several towns in northern France Wednesday, particularly along the Moselle in the northeast. Though many rivers were on the decline, more rain was expected during the day.

The worst hit was the Aisne Department where 170 patients had to be evacuated from a hospital in the Oise Valley.

Disabled girl gets wish... a day without teasing

FORT WAYNE, Indiana (AP) — Santa Claus brought her the doll she pined for. But it was Amy Hagadorn's classmates who gave the disabled third-grader her Christmas wish: A day without teasing. Amy, who has cerebral palsy, confided her wish in a letter to Santa mailed to radio station WJLT-FM and read on the air last week. "I have a problem at school," she wrote in pencil. "Kids laugh at me because of the way I walk and run and talk. I have cerebral palsy. I just want one day where no one laughs at me or makes fun of me." Last Friday, Amy's classmates at South Wayne Elementary School held a special day in her honour, granting her request, teacher Susan Danec said. The radio station, meanwhile, invited Amy to its broadcast Tuesday and arranged for Santa to drop by with the 3-foot-tall (1-metre) Barbie doll she wanted. Mayor Paul Helmke proclaimed Tuesday as Amy Hagadorn Day. "I think I had my Christmas today," a delighted Amy said. Since Amy's letter was widely reported, the 9-year-old has gotten cards, letters, gifts and calls from as far away as England. In Kansas, residents of a group home for people with cerebral palsy want to become Amy's pen pals. A Toronto mother whose son was born with half a skull is sending a videotape on how children should act around people with disabilities. And a Tennessee woman said she planned to use Amy's story in her Sunday school class.

"This has been great for her, and for her self-esteem," Amy's mother, Patti, said. It's touched the lives of so many.... The response has been overwhelming." So overwhelming, in fact, that Mrs. Hagadorn and her husband, Jim, worry that the outpouring may obscure the broader message in Amy's letter. All people should be treated with compassion.

Italian movie remains banned in N. Zealand

WELLINGTON (AFP) — A movie to get a 17-year-old ban on an Italian film lifted failed Wednesday after viewers at a special screening in Wellington decided the movie was "repellent." Salo: 120 Days of Sodom was the last film made by Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Made in 1975, it is set in the Nazi-controlled town of Salo, Italy, in 1944 and is an attack on fascism. In it, four dignitaries organise mass arrests of the town's youth, who are then subjected to sadistic sexual torture and murdered. The film was previously rejected for screening by the film censors in 1976.

The application to have the film reclassified was made by Australian distribution company Premium Films. A special screening was held last week for 24 members of the public, including representatives of Women Against Pornography, the National Council of Women, the Commissioner For Children, Victoria University's Italian Department, a police psychologist, filmmakers and film reviewers. Chief film censor Jane Wright's report said all at the screening described the film as "Repellent," the unanimous decision of the film censors office was to keep the ban. "In essence, the artistic and cultural elements, while undeniably present, do not sufficiently outweigh the other criteria in order that classification becomes a realistic option," the report said.

So much bitterness over sweet honey

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Chinese honey, which met about one fifth of U.S. demand for the sweetened last year, is jeopardising U.S. beekeepers' businesses, the U.S. International Trade Commission said Tuesday. Imports of honey from China are surging and disrupting the U.S. market; the announcement charged, without giving figures other than last year's. Chinese shipments of honey last year — some of it blends of natural and artificial honey — were worth \$26.1 million. U.S. consumers bought 135.4 million kilos (298.5 million pounds) of honey in 1992, 52 million kilos (114.6 million pounds) of which was shipped from other countries. The commission scheduled a public meeting on the honey issue for Jan. 4. It will recommend to President Bill Clinton three days later whether to slap a new import duty on Chinese honey, or to restrict imports to another way.

South African MPs pass new constitution

CAPE TOWN (AP) — The white-led parliament overwhelmingly approved a new constitution Wednesday giving blacks and whites equal rights for the first time.

The document, vehemently opposed by pro-apartheid white groups, replaces a constitution that for generations denied the black majority the right to vote, hold political office, or have any voice in national affairs.

"Now, for the first time, the future holds the promise of a brighter tomorrow," ANC President Nelson Mandela said in a written statement issued by ANC headquarters in Johannesburg. Mr. Mandela was en route to a Christmas vacation in the Bahamas.

President F.W. De Klerk's government and the African National Congress, the country's main black group, worked out the new constitution during two years of negotiations and heralded its approval. But right-wing whites warned of a violent backlash.

"This constitution is a monster," said the leader of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, Ferdi Hartzenberg, whose supporters stood up in parliament and sang the Afrikaner national anthem. Die Stem, just before the vote.

Speaking Wednesday morning, Mr. Hartzenberg said the constitution could not bring peace because it did not satisfy groups represented by the Freedom Alliance.

The fact that the Afrikaner nation, the Zulu nation and the Tswana nation are not accommodated means there is not a solution at this stage," he said.

Afrikaners are descendants of the early white settlers, while Zulus and Tswanas are two of the country's major black tribes.

Ghali voices deep concern over N. Korea

SEOUL (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Wednesday North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme could threaten not just regional security but also the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"I believe that this crisis is dangerous not only for the region here, but the way the crisis will be solved will have an impact on the renewal of the NPT in 1995 and all problems of proliferation," he told a Tokyo news conference before arriving in Seoul.

The secretary-general is in South Korea for an official visit prior to a "ground-breaking" trip across the cold war frontier for Christmas talks to Pyongyang on North Korea's nuclear intentions.

Dr. Ghali is to meet South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo later in the day and President Kim Young-Sam Thursday before heading

North to Pyongyang on Christmas Eve.

A South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said no specific topics had been fixed for the Seoul talks.

Dr. Ghali will be the first U.N. chief to enter Stalinist North Korea across the heavily-fortified inter-Korean border.

In Tokyo he said he did not have a mandate from the U.N. Security Council or any U.N. member state, including the United States, to negotiate with North Korea.

"This is a personal initiative," he said. "I will offer my good offices. I will make a goodwill visit to understand what the elements of the crisis are."

He said he was ready to convey any message from North Korea to the countries involved in the nuclear dispute.

The United States and other countries have accused North

Korea of secretly developing nuclear weapons.

The North flatly denied this, but it rattled the world in March by withdrawing from the nuclear safeguards treaty to avoid international inspection of two nuclear sites in Yongbyon, north of its capital Pyongyang.

The abrupt announcement raised fears it was developing nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang later agreed to suspend its withdrawal after accepting high-level talks with Washington.

Although Dr. Ghali will be the first U.N. chief since 1979 to go to isolated North Korea, Pyongyang's official media have not mentioned his visit.

South Korea says it has proposed a meeting with Northern officials at the border hamlet of Panmunjom Thursday to discuss providing security and convenience for the cross-border trip, but it is still awaiting a response.

Allegations on Clinton draw growing media attention

WASHINGTON (R) — New allegations of marital infidelities by President Bill Clinton have picked up for that man.

Mr. Patterson, who spent five years as a Clinton security Clinton was quoted by the Los Angeles Times as saying.

Leonard Downie Jr., executive editor of the Washington Post, which reported the allegations on its front page Tuesday, said: "Extramarital affairs is not the subject of our reporting. The subject of our reporting is the question of whether or not Bill Clinton, as governor and now as president, has in any way used government resources and power in any connection with his private life that would be improper."

Mr. Clinton himself has not responded to the charges but White House officials insist there is nothing new in them that did not emerge during the presidential campaign.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, in an interview with Reuters Tuesday, said the allegations were financially and politically motivated and would "end up in the garbage can."

"My husband's presidency speaks for itself, and what he has done in just one year for America... ultimately, that's how the American people are going to judge, not some story that somebody promotes for their own financial gain or because they have a political vendetta," she said.

The allegations came from Roger Perry and Larry Patterson, two Arkansas state troopers who provided security for Mr. Clinton when he was governor.

They alleged having driven him to secret sex assignations with several women, lining up women for him, booking hotel rooms and lying about her husband's whereabouts to Hillary Rodham Clinton. They said this behaviour even continued after Mr. Clinton was elected president in November 1992.

"We were more than bodyguards. We had to lie, cheat

and cover up for that man."

and offer an unstinting defence of her mate of 18 years.

Mrs. Clinton, in a bright red jacket and black slacks, was cheerful and friendly during the 20-minute interview with Reuters. It took place in the diplomatic reception room, a small salon in the residential part of the White House.

While the interview touched on the charges of two former bodyguards who claim they helped facilitate trysts for the president when he was governor, the main focus was on how the Clinton family has adjusted to Washington.

Asked what was the hardest part of it, Mrs. Clinton said: "Learning about what a big stage this really is."

But she said her greatest satisfaction was "that my family has gotten settled in here," and that her husband's first-year accomplishments on the economic front "are being appreciated by the American people."

When a reporter suggested that the Clintons' long working hours were burdensome, Mrs. Clinton replied with a half-smile "yeah," but said that in some ways it was easier for her and her husband and 13-year-old daughter to have a personal life in the White House.

"It's like living above the store because in many ways the fact that the president's office is just down the corridor means that he's home for dinner more, means that Chelsea can run over there to have him help with her homework, means that we can see each other during the day," she said.

As she did in a now-famous CBS "60 Minutes" television interview after the Gennifer Flowers controversy burst into the headlines during the 1992 presidential race, Mrs. Clinton

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Jordan basketball season nears end

By Abeer Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Less than a week remains for the 1993 basketball season to be completed, giving fans and players a brief break before the Jordan Basketball Federation issues the 1994 calendar of events.

In the final week of action, three matches are scheduled for Friday, the most interesting of which is the Watani-Hussein clash in which Al Hussein will try to avenge their first round 80-78 loss to Al Watani in double overtime.

Al Hussein this year ceded fifth place to Al Watani, secured their position an unexpected 83-80 win over Al Jali.

Al Watani lately beat Al Wifaq 71-37 and will now seek to score a second victory over

Al Hussein to challenge Al Jali for fourth place. However, they will have to score a big victory over Al Hussein to accomplish that ambition.

In another match Al Ashrafi, who lost 86-51 to Al Hussein in their latest match, will face third-place Al Jazireh.

Al Jazireh had won their first round encounter 103-47 against Al Ashrafi and are expected to repeat an easy victory over the newcomers who have already been relegated.

In the third match of the day, winless Al Wifaq will take on fourth-placed Al Jali, who lately lost 112-51 to former champions Al Orthodoxi.

During the first round Al Jali had scored a 105-40 victory over Al Wifaq who have joined Al Ashrafi on their

way back to the second division.

The only unbeaten team, titans Al Ahli, have no matches prior to their much-anticipated clash with all-time rivals Al Orthodoxi on Dec. 29.

Standings

team	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Ahli	13	13	1	1307	608	26
Orthodoxi	12	11	1	1170	716	23
Jazireh	13	9	4	1015	894	22
Jali	13	6	7	992	919	19
Watani	13	6	7	841	984	19
Hussein	13	4	9	931	1005	17
Ashrafi	13	2	11	626	1199	15
Wifaq	12	—	12	486	1045	12

*Al Orthodoxi and Al Wifaq have a postponed match.

Trinkl wins super-G from way back

LECH, Austria (Agencies) — Austrian Hannes Trinkl left the big names of Alpine skiing trailing in a super-G Wednesday — his first World Cup win.

Trinkl, among the unfancied runners with start number 51, shot down the 1.7 kms Kriegerhorn Piste in one minute 4.42 seconds.

A surprise was on the cards when another late-starter, Italy's Werner Oerathoner, had set the pace with 1:05.02 from 41st place in the order. Trinkl nudged him into second place.

Driving snow and a steady wind eased after the first 15 minutes of the race, favouring competitors like Trinkl as he attacked the 30 gates of the 460 metres drop.

Norway's Kjetil-andre Aamodt came eighth and gained first place in the overall champion-

ship from absent Italian showman Alberto Tomba.

Trinkl's previous best World Cup efforts were third places in two downhills last season.

The result made up for the disappointing performance of Lech-born Olympic champion Patrick Orteli, who made a major error seconds after leaving the start and failed to finish. Orteli was suffering from influenza and spent Tuesday in bed.

Reigning overall champion Marc Girardelli had to settle for fifth place.

Katja catcathese them hopping

Meanwhile Katja Koren of Slovenia gate-crashed the party in Flachau, Austria Wednesday to win her first World Cup.

race in the women's super giant slalom.

She won the last race before the Christmas break in Innsbruck, 15.62sec. to deny Bibiana Perez of Italy and world champion Katja Seizinger of Germany.

Perez thought here 1:15.70 was good enough to clinch her first win while Seizinger was seeking her first win this season.

The 21-year-old German timed 1:15.87 for the bumpy course which was turned into an icer by Tuesday's rain.

However the course became easier as the day wore on and the sun got to work.

Sweden's 1988 Olympic champion Pernilla Wiberg, who went 21st, just after Perez, eventually finished sixth.

Agassi out of Australian Open

SYDNEY (AFP) — Andre Agassi has scuttled organisers' hope of his long-awaited debut at the Australian Open by announcing his withdrawal from the year's opening tennis Grand Slam.

Last year's Wimbledon champion announced through the International Management Group (IMG) here he had a wrist operation early this week and would be out of action for up to a month.

The 23-year-old American, one of few modern-day tennis players with crowd-pulling appeal, has yet to play in the Australian Open last year he cried off with an attack of tonsilitis.

Richard Krajicek might also be forced to pull out after recent knee surgery although the Dutchman had not been in touch with organisers.

IMG Vice-President Graeme Hannan said Agassi's niggling wrist injury had not responded to cortisone injections over the last few weeks.

Hannan said Agassi had trained hard but when the cortisone wore off the pain intensified and on medical advice he was operated on in a Californian hospital Monday.

"He will not look at a tennis racket for another three or four weeks and it will probably be March before he is playing competitively again," Hannan said.

Australian Open General Manager Jim Reid said from Melbourne it was unfortunate the Australian Open had lost such a personality player.

"It's very said for the Australian public who were working forward to seeing him here for the first time, but we weren't sure how many rounds he would have got through because of the state of his fitness in recent months," Reid said.

Kevin Keegan joins front runners for England job

LONDON (AFP) — Kevin Keegan joined Terry Venables and Howard Kendall among the front runners for the vacant England manager's job Wednesday after a dramatic change of heart by Newcastle Chairman Sir Johan Hall.

Until now, Sir John had ruled out releasing Keegan from his new three-year contract as Newcastle manager.

However, the St James' Park Chairman indicated Wednesday that he would not be against the former England skipper helping the national side on a part-time basis.

"My first job is to Newcastle United, but at the same time I have to be a chairman who is responsible for the England team and I'm not against helping out if at all possible," he said.

"Kevin Keegan cannot be released on a full-time basis, but I'm not against helping England if they come up with any other formula."

"I've been criticised in the past for saying I would not help

England, but that has never been the situation."

Jimmy Armfield, appointed by the Football Association to headhunt for a successor to Graham Taylor, welcomed Sir John's comments, as he has always been a fan of Keegan.

"It's the first I've heard of this, but that response is exactly what I've wanted to hear — to be prepared to help England is what I want from any club," he said.

But Armfield admitted that the idea of a part-time appointment had not been considered.

"With regard to Kevin Keegan, it's the first I've thought about it," he added. "I hadn't really thought about anyone on a part-time basis to be honest."

"This is completely new and I would have to talk to the rest of the committee and the chairman, and see if there's going to be any change."

"If there's going to be any approach, it would be from the chairman of the FA direct to Sir John."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH DINAR SHARIF
& TANIAH HIRSCH
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WHAT'S THE HURRY?

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♦ A K Q 8
♦ 9 5 4
♦ A 8 5
♦ A Q 7

WEST
♦ 10 5 2
♦ 9 7 4
♦ 8
♦ J 10 9 7 6 2 0
♦ K Q 3
♦ 10 9 3
♦ K J 8 5

SOUTH
♦ J 8 3
♦ A K J 10 7 3
♦ 4
♦ 8 4 2

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 NT Pass 4 ♠ Pass
5 ♠ Pass 6 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♦
The lazy declarer takes a finesse because it's there. The winning declarer looks for a way to improve the odds over the 50 percent offered by the finesse.

South's jump to four hearts showed nothing but long hearts and enough to contract for game. With almost all prime values and three-card trump support, North inquired about the quality of South's trumps

by raising over game and South certainly had the values to go on to alarm.

Declarer won the diamond jack in dummy and cashed the ace and king of hearts, normal play with nine cards in the suit, to find out there was a trump loser. One club could be discarded on a spade, but there seemed no chance other than the club finesse to land the slam, so declarer led a club to the queen forthwith — down one.

Let's see what would happen if declarer postponed committing to a finesse. After winning the ace of diamonds at trick one, declarer should ruff a diamond. When the ace and king of hearts reveal that declarer must lose a trump, declarer can cross to a high spade and ruff the table's remaining diamond. Now declarer runs the spades.

It does not help East to ruff the fourth spade, so the defender discards a club. Now declarer exits with a trump and East, in the queen, is employed and forced to lead a club into dummy's major tenace, giving declarer the fulfilling trick.

What if East had another diamond? Declarer ruffs and can still fall back on the club finesse.

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Baggio set to follow the greats

ROME (R) — Roberto Baggio will take his place among the greats if he is named European Footballer of the Year as widely expected Sunday.

Baggio, 26, whose film-star good looks, distinctive ponytail and sublime skills have made him one of the biggest stars in world football today, is hot favourite to take the award and follow the likes of Stanley Matthews, Alfredo Di Stefano, Johan Cruyff, Michel Platini, Ruud Gullit and Marco Van Basten into European soccer's hall of fame.

These are heady days for the attacking utility player who has at last lived up to his early promise and is now justifying every cent of the 13 million that Juventus paid Fiorentina for his services in 1990 and what was then a world record transfer fee.

In May he helped Juventus win the UEFA Cup — the first major honour of his career. Last week he was named by national coaches polled by the International Football Federation (FIFA) as the world's best player.

Next year he could be the man to lead Italy to an unprecedented fourth World Cup final victory.

Not bad for someone once dubbed a loser a man who is a practising Buddhist and a man who has come back three times from serious injury to build a career at the highest level.

Baggio, deadly from set pieces and a fine passer and dribbler of the ball, already has great responsibility on his slim shoulders as soccer-crazy Ita-

lians look to him as the spearhead of their country's assault on the World Cup.

He will doubtless fall back on Buddhist forms of meditation to help ease the pressure of a competition which comes at a time when his wife is due to have their second child.

Baggio spoke about his conversion to the eastern faith during a recent television programme centred on the film Little Buddha by Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci.

"I was playing for Fiorentina at the time and had just suffered a serious injury. I needed something deeper than the Catholic religion," he said.

"Today Buddhism helps me control my mind better," added Baggio who first came to international prominence shortly before the 1990 World Cup when Juventus signed him from arch-rivals Fiorentina.

The volatile Florentine fans

rioted for several nights in protest while Baggio proved his class with one of the best goals of the World Cup — a superb solo run and chip over Czechoslovak goalkeeper Jan Stejskal.

However, Baggio was not a regular in the Italian side for a World Cup, which ended with the disappointment of semifinal elimination for the nation.

His first season at Juventus was equally calamitous with Italy's most successful club failing to qualify for European competition for the first time in almost 30 years.

Further disappointment followed the next year when Juventus finished league runners-up to AC Milan and lost the Italian Cup final to Parma.

Questions were asked about Baggio's character and as little as 12 months ago tough Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni

was openly wondering whether his captain was a true leader.

Baggio finally silenced his critics with match-winning performances to help Juventus beat Paris St. Germain in the UEFA Cup semifinal and overpower Borussia Dortmund in the final — netting five times in the final rounds.

He also emerged as the key player as Italy qualified for the World Cup, scoring five times to take his tally to 19 goals in 32 internationals while his nimble feet and quick brain also made him the main creator for the Italians.

"It's amazing how much he has matured over the past 12 months, how much more of a team player he has become," national coach Arrigo Sacchi said.

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Kevin Keegan joins front runners for England job

Agassi out of Australian Open

